AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

Volume 30 Number 3

July 1956

Published Quarterly

by

THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

THE AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Editorial Office

ROOM 320, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
816 STATE STREET
MADISON 3, WISCONSIN

AGRICULTURAL HISTORY

The Quarterly Journal of the Agricultural History Society

Agricultural History is designed as a medium for the publication of research and documents pertaining to the history of agriculture in all its phases and as a clearinghouse for information of interest and value to workers in the field. Materials on the history of agriculture in all countries are included, and also materials on institutions, organizations, and sciences which have been factors in agricultural development. The Society is not responsible for the statements or opinions of contributors. Editorial communications including manuscripts submitted for publication and books for review should be addressed to Vernon Carstensen, Editor, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Wisconsin, Madison 6, Wisc.

All members of the Agricultural History Society receive *Agricultural History*. The memberships are: Student, \$2.00; annual \$5.00; contributing, \$10.00; life, \$133.00, inclusive of all previous payments of dues and contributions, or a sum in U. S. dollars equivalent to 133 less the age of the applicant at his or her last birthday, exclusive of prior dues and contributions; joint membership with the Economic History Association, \$10.00; and joint membership with the Economic History Association and the Economic History Society (England), \$13.00. Single current numbers, \$1.50. Reprints, if available, 25 cents each. An annual subscription to *Agricultural History* is \$5.00 net. Communications regarding memberships, subscriptions, and other business matters should be addressed to Wayne D. Rasmussen, Secretary-Treasurer, Room 3905, S. Agr. Bldg., U. S. Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington 25, D. C.

Agricultural History is published for the Agricultural History Society at the Antes Printing Company, Evansville, Wisconsin.

Entered as second-class matter on October 12, 1928, at the post office of Baltimore, Maryland, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Re-entered July 20, 1955, at the post office at Evansville, Wisconsin.

COTTON BREEDING IN THE OLD SOUTH*

JOHN HEBRON MOORE

Delta State College

The first half of the nineteenth century was an era of great agricultural progress in the Cotton Kingdom. In those years, Southern farmers vastly increased the production of their staple crop and learned to grow it cheaply and efficiently. They reduced their operating costs by adopting labor-saving horse-drawn farm implements specially designed for the cultivation of row crops and by raising their own livestock and foodstuffs. Agricultural reformers taught them to conserve the fertility of their soil by making use of legumes and cotton seed fertilizer, and also taught them how to combat soil erosion with contour plowing, drainage ditches, and cover crops. Even more important, all of the farmers of the Lower South accepted as their standard strain a new upland cotton developed by Southwestern plant breeders during the early decades of the 1800's. This new variety, the famous Mexican hybrid, improved the yield and quality of American cotton to such an extent that it deserves to rank alongside Eli Whitney's gin in the Old South's hall of fame.[1]

The development of the Mexican hybrid stemmed originally from a strong demand for improved upland varieties current in the Lower South around the close of the eighteenth century. Farmers of this region had discovered soon after beginning the cultivation of cotton that the only two breeds available at the time, Georgia Green Seed[2] and the Creole Black Seed of the Lower Mississippi Valley,[3] were far from satisfactory. These cottons, though hardy and easy to grow under a wide range of conditions of soil and climate, were less productive than they desired, difficult to pick and clean, and distressingly subject to damage from plant diseases. Both, furthermore, were decidedly inferior in length of staple and quality of lint—and therefore always lower in market value—to the perennial Sea Island cotton of the West Indies and the South Atlantic seaboard.[4] Largely because of this price differential in favor of the Sea

*This article won the Everett Eugene Edwards Memorial Award as the outstanding manuscript submitted in 1955 by an author who was in course of taking an advanced degree.—*Ed.*

[1] For the history of ante-bellum Southern Agriculture, refer to: James C. Bonner, "Advancing Trends in Southern Agriculture, 1840-1860," *Agricultural History,* 22:248-259 (October, 1948) and "Genesis of Agricultural Reform in the Cotton Belt," *Journal of Southern History,* 9:475-500 (November, 1943); Avery O. Craven, "The Agricultural Reformers of the Ante-Bellum South," *American Historical Review,* 33:302-314 (January, 1928), "John Taylor and Southern Agriculture," *Journal of Southern History,* 4:137-147 (May, 1938), and *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860* (Urbana, Illinois, 1926); Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (2 vols., Washington, D. C., 1933); and Herbert Weaver, *Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860* (Nashville, 1945).

[2] Georgia Green Seed cotton, originally a native of the West Indies, was first cultivated in North America in 1734 from seeds furnished to the colonists by the English botanist Philip Miller of Chelsea. During the early 1800's, it was most easily distinguished from other varieties by its seeds, which were small, fuzzy, and green in color. Its low bush-like stalk had many branches, and its leaves, leaf stems, and veins were coated with a profusion of hairs. Its lint was short and coarse and very hard to separate from the seeds. Until the invention of Whitney's saw gin, Georgia Green Seed was prepared for market by wrenching the fiber from the seed by hand or by the taut string of a wooden bow, a primitive method of ginning that made this variety of cotton known to the European textile trade under the name of Georgia Bowed Cotton. Sir George Watt, *The Wild and Cultivated Cotton Plants of the World* (London, 1907), 183-189.

[3] The Creole Black Seed cotton was imported into Louisiana from Siam by the French during the 1730's. Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas, May 12, 1733, published in Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Mississippi Provincial Archives 1704-1743, French Dominion,* 3:600-601 (Jackson, Mississippi, 1932). In appearance, it greatly resembled the West Indian Sea Island cotton, having a large stalk, long white fiber, and large smooth black seeds. Unlike the perennial Sea Island plant, Creole was an annual that was always killed by the first heavy frost. Because of its small bolls, this Siamese variety was hard to pick, and its lint-seed ratio was unsatisfactory. On the other hand, Creole lint was of very good quality, usually selling for fifteen to thirty cents a pound. Benjamin L. C. Wailes, "Cotton," *Southern Planter,* 1:17-18 (1842), and Thomas Affleck, "The Early Days of Cotton Growing in the Southwest," *De Bow's Review,* 10:668-669 (1851).

[4] Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860,* 2:677.

Island breed, upcountry farmers were eager to obtain new strains having higher yields, longer staples, and finer textures than their old familiar types.

Southern planters left few avenues unexplored while searching for better breeds of upland cotton during the early nineteenth century. They tried often and always unsuccessfully to acclimate the Sea Island cotton tree to upcountry growing conditions.[5] They experimented with many cotton plants imported from far parts of the world. And they searched their fields of ordinary upland for chance mutations that might serve as parent stock for useful breeds of the staple. Some of their discoveries, when widely advertised in the newspapers and agricultural periodicals of the time, created short-lived sensations in farming circles, and the seed of these exotic varieties occasionally sold for brief periods at very high prices. When put to the test, however, the cottons obtained from abroad or culled from the field usually were found to have little permanent value. Hence a small body of scientific agriculturists, using crude methods of hybridizing and selective breeding, eventually assumed the task of providing the farmers of the South with high quality upland cottons.[6]

These pioneer plant breeders of the Old South have several notable achievements to their credit. In addition to developing the Mexican or Petit Gulf hybrid, they devised plant breeding techniques permitting them to adapt Mexican cotton to different growing conditions. And they nurtured their infant trade in improved cotton seed into a mature industry of some importance.

Although planters from many Southern states experimented with cottons during the antebellum period, those composing the commercial cotton breeding industry were largely confined to the Lower Mississippi Valley—the region having the South's most fertile soils. The Mexican hybrid cotton, upon which the Southern seed industry was founded, originated in Mississippi on plantations located near Natchez and Rodney, and most of the name brands subsequently derived from it were developed by cotton growers of the Vicksburg area. Because of this concentration of plant breeders within her borders, Mississippi became as famous for her fine cottons during the late antebellum period as she was for the number of bales produced on her farms and plantations.

The development of Mexican hybrid cotton in its initial stages was the result of chance rather than design. While in Mexico City, Walter Burling, a prominent Natchez planter, obtained some seeds of a fine long staple cotton that had been cultivated for many centuries by the Indians of the Central Mexican plateau.[7] He smuggled them out of the country and upon returning home gave some of his Mexican seed to William Dunbar, a close friend and neighbor. The following year, Dunbar, who was a scientist of some note, cultivated Burling's cotton experimentally along with some specimens of the tan-colored Nanking breed. At the end of the season he sent samples of the lint of both varieties to Liverpool for examination by textile experts. It is probable that the English textile experts sent Dunbar a favorable report on his Mexican cotton, which he had described as being "of a fine rich color, very silky, fine & strong, & rather a little longer—tho' not by much—than our own staple," because he continued to expand his planting of this species. By the time of his

[5] John C. Jenkins, Jr., in the Vicksburg (Mississippi) *Sentinel,* April 16, 1845, related the story of his experiments with Sea Island cotton on upland soils as follows: "Sea Island seed have been tried here over and over again, and have always failed. . . . The Cotton here will not mature more than a few bolls to the stalk before it is caught by frost. . . . If planted for several year [it gradually] becomes acclimated, but in doing this it loses its first character and finally turns out a very inferior sort of 'green seed'; and in no respect can be compared with Mexican." Because of this effect, Southern planters generally believed that Sea Island was the ancestor of all upland cottons of the green seed variety. *De Bow's Review,* 17:426 (1854).

[6] The Twin or Okra cotton was a famous example. This brand originated near Autauga, Alabama, in a field of ordinary Petit Gulf cotton. The owner there found a single stalk that had no limbs and the bolls grew in clusters directly on the trunk of the plant. Fascinated by its odd appearance, the farmer picked the cotton from the stalk, saved the seed, and cultivated them separately from his other cotton. When the size of his Twin cotton crop had increased to the point that he could spare some seed, he placed them on the market. They caught the fancy of the public for a time. In 1837, Twin seed sold for fifty cents each, and in 1838 they brought $160 a bushel. Within a few years, however, Twin cotton was found to be practically worthless, except as a curiosity. *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette,* September 3, 1839, quoting from the Savannah *Georgian.*

[7] B. L. C. Wailes was the author of the only account now extant of the introduction of Mexican cotton into the United States. He obtained his information on this subject many years after the event in interviews with persons having first-hand knowledge of the facts. His story of this incident is found in Wailes, *Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi, Embracing a Sketch of the Social and Natural History of the State* (Philadelphia, 1854), 143.

death in 1810, Dunbar had succeeded in increasing his annual crop of the Mexican variety to more than three thousand pounds of ginned cotton.[8]

Following Dunbar's example, other planters of the neighborhood took up the cultivation of Burling's Mexican cotton. Because they had scant knowledge of the science of biology, these cotton growers took no pains to separate their crops of Mexican from their ordinary Creole and Georgia Green Seed varieties; consequently the three species tended to mingle through natural cross-pollination. The result of the planters' negligence, however, was beneficial rather than harmful. Their crossbreed Creole-Green Seed-Mexican cotton exhibited some of the desirable characteristics of each of its parents.

A description of the Mexican hybrid at this stage of its development appeared in an Eastern agricultural periodical in 1820. This cotton, in the opinion of the writer, had many qualities that would be desirable to cotton growers everywhere. Its staple was longer and the grade of the lint higher than Creole or Green Seed. It ripened earlier in the fall than any other type then in cultivation in the United States, and it displayed a noticeable tendency to mature many of its bolls simultaneously. Even more important, it possessed exceptional picking properties. Its large four or five-sectioned bolls opened so widely upon ripening that their lint could be plucked from the pod more easily than any other known variety of the staple. Because of this unusual quality, pickers could gather three to four times as much Mexican in a day as they could the common Georgia Green Seed cotton. Most important of all, the Mexican strain was totally immune to the rot, the dreaded plant disease that was then destroying both the Creole and Georgia Green Seed crops in the Mississippi Valley.[9]

In contrast to these valuable properties, the Mississippi Mexican hybrid cotton of the 1820's possessed only one serious fault. It could not be left unpicked in the fields long after the bolls had begun to ripen. In this regard the very quality that made Mexican so valuable gave planters of that variety their greatest difficulty. The lint that was so easy to gather was likely to fall to the ground of its own accord shortly after the pods opened fully. Consequently, planters of the Mexican hybrid cotton in the twenties were always in danger of suffering losses from early fall winds and rains.[10]

While increasing numbers of cotton growers of the Lower Mississippi Valley were taking up the cultivation of the rot-resistant Mexican cotton in the 1820's, that strain was undergoing gradual changes. The modifications resulted in part from the adjustment of the plant to new conditions of soil and climate and partly from additional interbreeding with the Creole and Green Seed varieties. This process had progressed so far by the end of the decade that the hybrid had assumed the properties for which it was known during the remainder of the ante-bellum period. It retained the wooly white seeds, the large bolls, the good picking characteristics, and the immunity to the rot which were the distinctive features of Burling's original importation. From Georgia Green Seed, it inherited the ability to retain lint in the pod for a much longer time after ripening than the original Mexican stock had possessed. In size, the plants of the new breed were somewhere between the very large Mexican and the small bushlike Georgia upland. Although its lint was somewhat shorter and coarser than the high grade long staple of Burling's cotton, it was nevertheless rated as an excellent specimen of short staple and much superior in quality to the best of Georgia Green Seed or Creole or Creole Black Seed.[11]

The so-called Mexican cotton of Mississippi was further refined during the 1830's through the work of a group of able planters living in the "Gulf Hills" region of Mississippi not far from the town of Rodney. Seed of this Natchez grown hybrid was introduced originally into this part of the state in 1824 by Lewellyn Price. As he had obtained only one small parcel of the Mexican hybrid seed, Price was compelled to cultivate these specimens for several years under virtually garden-like conditions before obtaining a supply of seed large

[8] William Dunbar to Green & Wainwright, October 2, 1807, Dunbar Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and Samuel Postlethwait to Green & Wainwright, November 22, 1810, published in Eron O. Rowland, ed., *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar of Elgin, Morayshire, Scotland, and Natchez, Mississippi: Pioneer Scientist of the Southern United States* (Jackson, Mississippi, 1930), 389-390.

[9] *American Farmer,* 2:116 (1820); Wailes, "Cotton," 17-18.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Affleck, "Early Days of Cotton Growing," 668-669; *American Farmer,* 2:116 (1820); Wailes, "Cotton," 17-18; Wailes, *Report,* 143-144; Watt, *Cotton Plants,* 21, 192-196.

enough for extensive planting and experimentation. Price's Mexican cotton, according to the testimony of a near neighbor, improved noticeably under intensive cultivation in rich freshly cleared soil, greatly increasing in yield and in quality of fiber.[12]

After Price had been planting his Mexican cotton for several years, Dr. Rush Nutt and others obtained some seed from him. Nutt, who was an important experimenter in his own right, introduced into Mississippi agriculture the practice of carefully selecting the cotton seeds intended for planting on the basis of their appearance, and his innovation soon became a commonplace among his neighbors of the Gulf Hills. The technique employed by these pioneer seed breeders consisted of nothing more than choosing for planting purposes only the largest and best formed of fuzzy white seeds; they scrupulously rejected small, immature or misshapen seeds as well as those showing any characteristics of the old Green Seed or Black Seed varieties. By this primitive method of selective breeding, Nutt and his friends were able to preserve the best qualities that their cotton had inherited from its Mexican ancestor, while guarding against its tendency to revert to the properties of its inferior Green Seed parent stock.[13]

Planting seed of the Mexican hybrid variety from the Gulf Hills area went on sale in the year 1833 in market towns of the Old South as far apart as New Orleans and Augusta, Georgia. After a trial of only one season, the Petit Gulf cotton, as this hybrid became known commercially, quickly won a highly favorable reputation wherever it was planted. The time of its introduction into the Eastern states was exceptionally opportune. In 1834, the common Green Seed upland cotton of the East became badly infected with the rot, which had moved eastward from the Mississippi Valley; and crop yields of this traditional variety of cotton were reduced in many areas of Georgia and South Carolina by as much as thirty per cent. Those who planted the Petit Gulf in that year learned that this Southwestern cotton was not subject to the disease even when growing adjacent to stands of infected Green Seed cotton.[14]

Immunity to the rot alone would have been sufficient to win the hearty approval of Eastern cotton growers for Petit Gulf, but they found that it had other desirable qualities as well. On the red clay soils of the East, Petit Gulf produced more cotton of a higher quality than did undamaged Green Seed, and this Mexican hybrid was much easier to gather. Progressive Eastern farmers in subsequent years, therefore, began to import this special breed of the staple from the distributing point at New Orleans, and many of them made a practice of renewing their stocks at regular intervals in order to check the Petit Gulf's habit of degenerating after growing for several seasons on inferior soils of the Eastern piedmont. In consequence, the Eastern states became an important market for the seed breeders of the Mississippi Gulf Hills, and the trade in planting seed that developed during the closing years of the 1830's made Mississippi the Old South's major breeder and supplier of high grade cottons.

The farmers of the Lower South had not yet completed the process of converting from Creole and Georgia Green Seed cottons to the prolific rot-resistant Petit Gulf hybrid, when their entire agricultural system was rocked by the depression of 1837-49. In its early stages, the depression was an unmitigated catastrophe for the Cotton Kingdom. Credit for purchasing new land and slaves became impossible to obtain. Outstanding debts were called in by banks that were desperately striving to remain solvent, and foreclosures on property became the order of the day. In 1839, cotton prices began to slide downward, finally reaching an all-time low of less than five cents a pound in 1845. Under such conditions, cotton farmers found it difficult merely to survive. Shrinking incomes compelled them to reduce their cash expenditures to the barest minimum, and they were forced to increase their output of the staple to compensate for the decline in market price.[15]

The depression that was such a disaster for the ordinary cotton grower at the same time was a golden opportunity for the cotton seed supplier. The demand for improved planting seed expanded enormously during these years

[12] Affleck, "Early Days of Cotton Growing," 668-669.

[13] John F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi as a Province, Territory and State, with Biographical Notices of Eminent Citizens* (Jackson, 1880), 142-143; Horace S. Fulkerson, *Random Recollections of Early Days in Mississippi* (Vicksburg, 1885), 12-14.

[14] *Farmers' Register,* 1:575 (1834); 2:122-123, 591 (1835); James L. Watkins, *King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review 1790-1908* (New York, 1908), 74-75; Watt, *Cotton Plants,* 226-239.

[15] The daily cotton prices prevailing in the New Orleans market for the period between 1825 and the Civil War were republished from the New Orleans *Price Current* in E. J. Donnell, *Chronological and Statistical History of Cotton* (New York, 1872).

as farmers struggled to raise the grades and yields of their crops by planting the best cotton varieties available. The new business brought real prosperity to reputable breeders. It also lured many unscientific planters into the trade.

Many of the unqualified newcomers were no credit to the cotton seed industry. A majority of them were motivated only by a desire to augment their incomes by selling their cotton seed as well as their lint and some of them were lacking in ethics. As a rule, they fell into two general categories. One group imported cottons from Asia, Africa, and Central and South America and sold the unimproved seed to gullible farmers at high prices. On the whole, the importers had very little success in marketing their wares. The second group had more luck in disposing of their seed. They were planters who had found accidental mutations among their ordinary Mexican cotton and who were selling them under such eye-catching names as "Chinese Silk," "Okra," and "Twin Cotton." Buyers who succumbed to the florid advertising that often accompanied the entrance of these name brands into the trade, were frequently disappointed. In most cases, the proprietors of the "new" cotton had selected original plants because of their unusual appearance rather than for the quality or quantity of their lint. Hence new varieties often yielded less than their promoters claimed, and their fiber was not always as good as that of the ordinary Mexican cotton. Buyers who considered themselves cheated often wrote letters at the end of the season to editors of newspapers and agricultural periodicals denouncing the extravagant claims advanced by the originators of these expensive "humbugs."[16]

While these fly-by-night promoters of worthless cottons were shaking the confidence of Southern farmers in the commercial seed industry, other men, working in the tradition of Rush Nutt and his fellow breeders of the Gulf Hills, were performing valuable services for the agricultural community. During the forties they greatly advanced the science of cotton breeding, and at the same time provided Southerners with refined strains of the Mexican hybrid having longer staples, higher yields, and finer lint textures than the Petit Gulf. Of these, Henry W. Vick, of Warren County, Mississippi, was the outstanding example.

There was nothing in the early career of Henry W. Vick to suggest that he would eventually become the most successful cotton breeder and seed dealer of the Old South. He had inherited a moderate fortune from his father, Reverend Newet Vick (for whom the town of Vicksburg was named), and he added to his patrimony during the boom years of the 1830's. In those years and afterward, he was a typical member of the large slave-owning class of planter. He owned and operated several plantations in the hills of Central Mississippi and in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta country; and he customarily left their management to overseers, limiting his own interference to periodic visits of inspection. Like most absentee landowners of the time, he was chronically dissatisfied with the work of his overseers, but his discontent was not strong enough to cause him to take personal control of his plantations. Like many big planters, he was more concerned with "internal improvements" — especially Mississippi River levees—and the fortunes of the Whig party than he was with agricultural reform. That such a man should have revolutionized the Old South's cotton breeding methods and succeeded in developing one of the most famous brands of cotton of the ante-bellum era was itself extraordinary.

Vick's original stock of cotton seed had been "little brown" or drab Petit Gulf Mexican, which he had obtained from the Gulf Hills. For seven years, he cultivated this strain without making any attempt to improve or modify its characteristics. He did take care to preserve its purity by selecting uniform seed for planting, but that was the full extent of his activity in cotton breeding between 1830 and 1837. For some reason, he ultimately became dissatisfied with his Petit Gulf cotton, and in the year of the panic set about improving it by the method of selective breeding introduced into Mississippi by Rush Nutt.[17]

Following Nutt's system, Vick instructed his overseers to choose planting seeds having a certain characteristic appearance. The theory upon which the Nutt system was based, of course, was that uniform Mexican seed would

[16] For examples, refer to Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, December 20, 1849; Port Gibson (Mississippi) *Herald*, January 23, 1845; *Southern Cultivator*, 2:47, 184, 192, 200, 208 (1844); 3:50, 60-61 (1845); 17:vii (1859); 18:167 (1860); Vicksburg *Sentinel*, June 13, 1845.

[17] Henry W. Vick to Martin W. Philips, March 15, 1847, Vicksburg *Sentinel*, July 7, 1848.

produce superior Mexican cotton. There was an inherent difficulty, however: How was one to tell which were the superior seeds if they were judged only by appearance? After two years of experimentation, Vick concluded that superior seed could not be detected by size, shape, or color, and he discarded the Nutt approach altogether.[18]

After considerable thought, Vick decided to try a method of selective breeding that had long been used effectively by Northern corn and wheat growers, but which at the time was almost unknown to cotton planters of the South. It consisted of selecting the healthiest and most productive plants in the field rather than the prettiest seed in the bin. In applying this method to cotton breeding, Vick instructed his overseers to send his most intelligent Negroes into the field in advance of the regular picking gangs. These Negroes were to gather seed cotton from only the largest and most productive cotton plants. This cotton was then ginned separately from the rest of the crop, and its seed was reserved for the following year's planting. Vick was temporarily satisfied with the results obtained in this way, and he continued the practice without change from 1839 until 1844.[19]

In those years, Vick generally placed his stock of surplus seed on consignment with merchants in Vicksburg, Yazoo City, Jackson, and Natchez. In the early forties, he was pleased to discover that his selected Mexican seed was rapidly acquiring a reputation for high quality. In fact, many cotton growers were willing to pay slightly higher prices for Vick's seed when they learned that his pickers were gathering them "from the best bolls from the best stalks only."[20]

In 1843, Vick became sufficiently interested in his plant breeding experiments to take a more active hand in the enterprise. That year he happened to spend the summer and fall at "Nita Yuma," a plantation located in the Delta country, and he whiled away the dull evenings by examining cotton specimens that he had gathered during the day from plants of unusual size and yield of lint. When he began to inspect those locks with minute care, Vick made a remarkable discovery that became the starting point for his later experiments. This was the story as he related it:

> In examining the products of the different stalks, which amounted to hundreds of bundles, and which was the labor of a winter, I spread the bundles out on the table before me. Satisfied that the fingers would bring to light much valuable, perhaps essential, information that would be hidden by the gin, I determined to make the investigation thorough and complete. It was not long before I plainly saw that what I had supposed to be a homogenous [*sic*] stock of cotton seed, consisted in fact of ten or a dozen distinct varieties. I became attentive to the shades of difference. Of these ten or a dozen, six were evidently greatly superior to the rest; my selections were confined to those. Of the six, one consisted of twelve locks only. The size and beauty of the locks, the style in which they were put up, the abundance, length, fineness and lustre of the lint, form and hue of the seed, led me to pronounce them at once a new, distinct and valuable variety. I picked them. They yielded precisely [*sic*] 100 seed. Having so many names to furnish, the singularity of the incident suggested a name that would sufficiently distinguish them, and at the same time, with me, perpetuate their history. I called them my "100 Seed" cotton.[21]

In this way perhaps the best known name brand of cotton of the late ante-bellum South acquired its separate identity.

In 1844, Vick planted his tiny supply of Hundred Seed and cultivated it with exquisite care. After the cotton had ripened, he gathered and cleaned it by hand. To his delight, the lint was uniform and exactly like the splendid specimens of the year before. That fall, the small plot of Hundred Seed yielded two bales which sold in New Orleans for $2\frac{1}{8}$ cents a pound more than his select Petit Gulf.[22]

Vick personally went through his 1845 crop of Hundred Seed as soon as it matured to gather superior specimens for further experimentation. These he subjected to the same close examination that had produced the parent stock. "Judge of my surprise," Vick wrote later, "at finding my '100 Seed' springing upon me four new varieties the first year, each possessing some peculiar excellence of its own." To those fresh strains, he gave the names Sub-Nigri, Belle-Creole, Diamond, and Lintonia.[23]

The 1845 crop of Hundred Seed produced enough to plant two thirds of Vick's cotton acreage the next spring. So that he might compare his own cotton with other well-known name brands of the time, he planted the remainder of his land in Abbey's Mastodon,[24]

[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*, June 13, 1845.

[21] *Ibid.*, July 7, 1848.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] Richard Abbey's Mastodon cotton was the only imported cotton to retain its popularity during the 1850's. Abbey imported this cotton into Mississippi in 1841, cultivated it on his Yazoo County plantation, and put it on the market in 1845. His adver-

Weem's Guatemala, Lane's Yucatan, Farmer's Sugar Loaf, Lewis's Prolific, and a Mexican-Egyptian hybrid developed by Haller Nutt.[25] When the crop had been gathered, ginned, and examined, Vick was fully convinced of the superiority of Hundred Seed.[26] He then began to sell seed of his improved variety at $1.00 to $1.50 a bushel. The price depended upon the quantity ordered, but even the $1.50 was more reasonable than the charges usually made for new varieties.[27] The low cost and uniformly high quality of the Vick Hundred Seed gradually made it a favorite with many Southern cotton growers, and for the remainder of the ante-bellum period customers from all the cotton states continued to buy everything that Vick could supply.[28]

In this era of unbridled capitalism, no legal or ethical barriers prevented a seed salesman from appropriating the work of another as his own. Consequently, cotton growers sometimes obtained seed of improved varieties from a breeder, grew crops of their own from them, and then sold the seed under the original owner's brand or under other names of their own choosing. Such practices often led to abuses that were costly both to the customer and the developer of the cotton. If the suppliers retained the cotton's true name, the reputation of the originator was likely to suffer. For seed sold by such persons were frequently inferior to those supplied by the original owner. The customer, of course, was liable to financial losses when he bought poor seed at premium prices. In cases where the seller gave a name of his own selection to the cotton, the seed breeder's reputation was protected, but the customer was not so fortunate. Thus a planter ran a risk when he purchased name brand seed unless he was personally acquainted with the supplier. In time, this unfortunate situation was resolved by the development of "pedigreed" seed, of which the salesman guaranteed the purity and parentage. But this solution to the problem was not found in time to be of much help to seed breeders or cotton planters of the prewar period.

Vick, as the leading cotton breeder of Mississippi, was the one most frequently victimized by seed dealers. "Jethro" cotton illustrated how other men profited from his work. In the course of experimenting with his 1846 crop of Hundred Seed, Vick sent several different samples to his old friend Martin Philips for testing in the field under new conditions. Philips planted them in an experimental plot in the spring of 1847 and cultivated and picked the cotton with his own hand. He had different cottons ginned separately and then compared them with many other kinds that he had in his possession. After tabulating the results, Philips sent a lengthy report to Vick generally very favorable to his strains. For further investigation, Philips kept a portion of the seed from Vick's cottons; and the remainder he distributed among such friends as ex-Governor James Henry Hammond, of South Carolina, and Jethro V. Jones, a former editor of the *Southern Cultivator*. Philips labeled the package of Vick seed that he sent to Jones with the name "Jethro" cotton as a compliment to a fellow worker in the field of agricultural improvement. Jones planted the seed on his experimental farm in Burke County, Georgia, found the Vick cotton exceptionally well suited to conditions in Middle Georgia, and subsequently, through the medium of the *Southern Cultivator*, made "Jethro" famous among planters of the Southeastern states. Vick, the originator of the strain, received no financial benefits whatever from these sales in the Southeastern states. Philips, however, in several letters to the press carefully publicized the facts about Jethro's history, and he gave full honors to Vick for his path-breaking work.[29]

tising campaign was extraordinarily successful, and his seed sold well during the remainder of the ante-bellum period. Mastodon was a long staple cotton that usually sold for a few cents a pound more than improved Petit Gulf. The quality that endeared it to cotton farmers, however, was its ability to retain its lint in the pod in spite of wind and rain. Because of this characteristic, Mastodon could be left untouched until the main crop had been gathered. In practice, Mastodon thus permitted farmers to increase the size of their over-all crop without enlarging their labor force. Carrollton (Mississippi) *Democrat,* March 4, 1846; Jackson (Mississippi) *Southron,* December 10, 1845, and November 4, 1846; New Orleans *Commercial Times,* January 3 and 10, 1846; United States Patent Office, *Report* (1848), 505-509; *Southern Cultivator,* 4:141 (1846); Vicksburg *Sentinel,* March 4, 1847.

[25] For Haller Nutt's story of his experiments with hybrid Mexican and Egyptian cotton, see *Farmers' Register,* 9:312-314 (1841).

[26] Vicksburg *Sentinel,* July 7, 1848.

[27] *Ibid.,* January 11, 1851.

[28] Vick's Hundred Seed was the standard variety planted on "Nanechehaw Plantation" in Warren County as late as 1861. Charles Allen Plantation Book, April 6 and 13, 1861, in Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

[29] Columbus (Georgia) *Times and Sentinel,* February 26, 1853; Martin W. Philips, "The Different—Varieties of Cotton Seed," *De Bow's Review,* 19: 224-225 (1855); Macon (Georgia) *Journal and*

In the development of at least four other cotton strains, Vick apparently did not receive the credit due him. In all likelihood, Banana, Cluster, Hogan, and Pomegranate (four well-known brands of the 1850's), were offsprings of Vick's Hundred Seed. These cottons were placed suddenly on the market by several of Vick's Warren County neighbors, none of whom had any previous reputation as a cotton breeder. The fact that these strains proved to be identical and of high excellence indicates a common origin in the vicinity of Warren County. Significantly, not one of the promoters ever discussed the origin of his strain.

The "Banana Cotton" was introduced to the public by William Hogan and John Hebron of the Bovina community of Warren County.[30] It won almost immediate acceptance from planters in all the cotton states, and by the end of the decade was being sold under as many labels "as there are persons who desire to make money by selling seed."[31] It is known to have gone out from Mississippi to other states as Boyd's Cluster, Boyd's Prolific, Washburne's Olive, Hogan, Hebron's Banana, and Mitchell's Pomegranate. There doubtless were many other aliases that have long since been forgotten.[32] The price of the seed varied far more widely than the price of the lint, and depended upon the greed and salesmanship of the supplier. Martin Philips sold Banana seed regularly at one dollar a bushel;[33] Mitchell sold Pomegranate in Georgia and South Carolina in 1850 at $2.50 a bushel; and John Hebron and William Hogan at one time marketed Banana at ten cents a seed.[34] On the whole, however, Banana could be obtained for $1.50 a bushel during most of the 1850's.[35]

No matter what its name, the Banana was a fine and productive variety of Mississippi cotton, and it well deserved its extraordinary reputation.[36] In 1850, for example, planters of Sumter County, Alabama, conducted tests with Pomegranate seed obtained from General George D. Mitchell of Warren County, Mississippi. Sumter County soil was much less fertile than either the hills of Warren County, Mississippi, or the lowlands of Yazoo County, and the strands of cotton obtained by the Alabama farmers were below average. Yet on their test plots, they produced averages as high as two thousand pounds of seed cotton to the acre.[37] The stalks of Pomegranate cotton grew to heights of three feet on poor land and six to eight feet on rich bottom lands, and they were thickly covered with big bolls. Philips, on one occasion, counted as many as fifty-four bolls on a bush two and a half feet tall and 134 on a three-foot stalk.[38] Pomegranate's staple was somewhat longer than that of ordinary Petit Gulf and it brought a better than average price at New Orleans.

The business of selling name brand seed proved highly profitable to such planters as Martin W. Philips, who knew how to advertise effectively. Philips' agricultural writings bore a high reputation throughout the Southern states, and agriculturists were accustomed to turning to him for advice. As soon as new varieties of cotton began to appear on the market in the forties, farmers began to direct inquiries to him about seed, and some asked him for samples. Thus, in an indirect manner, Philips was drawn into the business of selling seed. He conducted tests with all the different seeds he could obtain, in order to answer questions from his agricultural friends; and he eventually began to sell his surplus seeds. Because he frequently received orders that he could not fill from his own supplies, he became a sort of middleman for other cotton growers for whom he procured seed. His seed trade grew rapidly in the 1840's and finally became

Messenger, January 18 and December 27, 1854; *Southern Cultivator,* 8:18-19, 50 (1850); 12:102 (1854); and J. V. Jones to D. W. Lewis, October 1, 1852, published in the *Transactions of the Southern Central Agricultural Society, from its Organization in 1846 to 1851, with an Introduction Giving the Origin and Brief History of the Society, by David W. Lewis, Esq., Secretary of the Society* (Macon, 1852), 406-408.

[30] *De Bow's Review,* 19:224-225 (1855); *Southern Cultivator,* 7:11-12 (1849); 8:131-132 (1850); Vicksburg *Sentinel,* September 22, 1847 and December 6, 1848; Vicksburg *Whig,* August 30, 1848.

[31] *De Bow's Review,* 19:224-225 (1855).

[32] Martin W. Philips, "Varieties of Cotton Seed," *De Bow's Review,* 10:567-568 (1851); A. W. Washburne to Daniel Lee, November, 1855, *Southern Cultivator,* 13:340 (1855).

[33] *De Bow's Review,* 10:567-568 (1851).

[34] Hogan cotton seed was advertised for sale at ten cents a seed by Downs & Company in the Vicksburg *Sentinel,* September 22, 1847.

[35] G. D. Mitchell to W. S. Jones, April 30, 1852, *Southern Cultivator,* 10:245-246 (1852).

[36] William Hogan, "Hogan Cotton Seed," Vicksburg *Sentinel,* December 6, 1848. See also John Hebron, E. H. Bryan, and David Gibson, Jr., "Banana Cotton Seed," Vicksburg *Whig,* August 30, 1848.

[37] Aberdeen (Mississippi) *Independent,* February 1, 1851 and March 20, 1852.

[38] Martin W. Philips to Daniel Lee, February 1, 1851, Aberdeen (Mississippi) *Independent,* February 1, 1851.

a major source of income. By 1850, Philips had made enough profits from the sale of seed to liquidate debts that had been incurred at the time of the crash.[39]

While Philips developed no new varieties of cotton, he performed useful services to cotton growers by testing dozens of new strains of cotton on his Hinds County plantation. He issued truthful and unbiased reports on the comparative worth of these strains and he waged a long and sometimes acrimonious fight to bring honesty into the Southern cotton seed industry. He always insisted that dispensers of seed use correct and accurate labels and tell their customers where the seed came from. He recommended that each distinct variety of cotton be given a standard name that would be the same regardless of the location or ownership of the plantation where it was grown. In the fifties, Philips fought more than one battle to protect the pocketbook of the customer. In one well publicized episode, General George D. Mitchell, a planter of Warren County, had the misfortune to become the target of Philips' wrath. In 1850, Mitchell began a most effective advertising campaign to convince planters everywhere of the superiority of his brand of cotton.[40] He succeeded so well that he soon sold out his supply of Pomegranate seed. Because his customers were paying $2.50 a bushel for it, he was loath to return any unfilled orders. So he purchased Banana seed from neighbors for a dollar a bushel and resold it as Pomegranate for more than twice as much. There was no deliberate fraud, for Mitchell, Hebron, Hogan, Philips, and other seed producers were aware that Banana and Pomegranate were one and the same. Philips, however, was incensed by Mitchell's high prices, and he proceeded to expose the General's profitable scheme. Curiously, Mitchell's customers still persisted in ordering Pomegranate seed from him at his price even after Philips had declared publicly that they could buy it elsewhere for as little as a dollar a bushel. This certainly was a demonstration of the power of advertising—or of the persistence of suckers![41]

Although Philips failed to spike Mitchell's guns completely in this particular instance, his reports probably did have the effect of checking others who might have been tempted to exceed the latitude enjoyed by seed breeders of the time. And his commentaries on the relative value of different varieties possessed value for honest breeders as well as for their customers.

In addition to other services to seed breeders, Philips tried to popularize information about hybridization. Of course, he did not originate these principles, for they had long been known to botanists. Nor was he the first cotton planter to conduct experiments in crossing cotton breeds. Yet he did state those principles in terms that Southerners could understand. This he did in an article published in the Yazoo City *Yazoo Democrat* in 1851. In part Philips said:

> I think cotton will mix and that thus a cross breed may be raised—but only if done through the bloom. My reason for stating this plainly is that I have been asked if there could be mixture by roots. I think it is possible only that wind might blow the reproductive matter from one plant upon the proper organs in another plant—and thus fructification might take place. But this is barely possible from the shape of the bloom. I feel well assured that this does take place by the means of bugs, flies, or insects in general, passing from one bloom to another —but not to the extent that many suppose . . . so soon as the bloom opens . . . the stamens (male apparatus of a flower) burst and give out the dust, which is received by the pistil (the female organ) and is thus fructified. The pistil, or 'pistillum,' contains the 'ovules,' or young seed within the ovary and must be fructified by the dust contained in the stamens. Thus a bee if entering the blooms early enough, may bring about a hybrid. . . . [42]

Unfortunately, Southern cotton breeders made little use of the technique of crossing plants, which Philips suggested. They preferred instead to depend either upon the old methods of Rush Nutt or upon the better system of plant improvement worked out by Henry W. Vick.[43] On the whole, Southerners took little or no advantage of botanical knowledge until after the Civil War.

By the close of the ante-bellum period the cotton seed trade had undergone radical changes. Where improved Mexican seed had sold anonymously as Petit Gulf during the late thirties, they were marketed in the fifties under brand names peculiar to the supplier. Competition in price and advertising had be-

[39] Philips to Lee, February 13, 1850, *Southern Cultivator,* 8:41 (1850).

[40] G. D. Mitchell to Daniel Lee, November 7, 1851, Aberdeen *Independent,* January 24, 1852. See also *ibid.,* March 20, 1852; Columbus (Georgia) *Sentinel,* January 3, 1850.

[41] Aberdeen *Independent,* January 24, 1852; *Southern Cultivator,* 8:92, 165 (1850); 10:245-246 (1852).

[42] Martin W. Philips, "Hybrid Cotton," Yazoo City (Mississippi) *Yazoo Democrat,* February 19, 1851.

[43] *Southern Cultivator,* 11:79 (1853); 14:87 (1856); *De Bow's Review,* 10:567-568 (1851).

come the rule, and customers demanded that their planting seed be selected by the breeder in accordance with the system developed by Henry W. Vick. In brief, the trend was toward longer staples and higher per acre yields than Petit Gulf once had provided. A class of professional seed breeders and suppliers had come into being to supply the demand for cottons of specialized types.[44] Only the wide use of hybridization techniques and the certification of seed were needed to transform the cotton seed industry of the late ante-bellum period into its modern counterpart.

[44] During the late 1850's, two Georgians, Charles A. Peabody and David Dickson, joined the ranks of the better known professional cotton breeders. Their products, however, were sold largely in their native state. Columbus (Georgia) *Daily Sun*, March 9, 1861; *Southern Cultivator*, 13:72 (1855); 18:57, 90 (1860).

AGRICULTURAL PRICE CONTROL IN PIONEER UTAH

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON

Utah State Agricultural College

Any student of the policies and practices, institutions and social devices, applied by the Mormon people in pioneer Utah must be struck with the all-pervasiveness of ecclesiastical direction and control of economic processes.[1] The unchanging attitude of Brigham Young, his associates, and nineteenth-century successors, seems to have been that economic policy was an indispensable ingredient in the divinely-appointed task of building an earthly Kingdom of God, and that the economic system required some managing to guard against failure, or, alternatively, to insure maximum success. This attitude is to be contrasted with the *laissez faire* of "orthodox" economics under which contemporary governing authorities were counselled to leave the system alone because interference would only force prices to "unnatural" levels and thus ruin the splendid harmonic equilibrium which the "automatic" operation of supply and demand would inevitably achieve.

From what can be learned of their thinking from their sermons and actions, it is evident that Mormon leaders had little confidence in the "automatic" functioning of an uncontrolled (by public authorities) market in which innumerable individuals competed for economic advantage and personal gain. They did not see such a market resulting in an "ideal" regulation of production, allocation of resources, and distribution of income. It seems to have been the thought of the more articulate of these leaders that the conditions which might have made the price system effective in regulating economic affairs were absent within their desert commonwealth. The value of money fluctuated greatly, not only over the cycle, but from season to season and from place to place; the mobility of resources was severely limited by inadequate transportation and communication facilities; production for sale was insufficient to provide competitive markets; and the division between Mormon and Gentile introduced a noneconomic consideration which well-nigh rendered market control unworkable.

One of the most interesting and least known examples of pioneer Mormon economic action on the church level is that which resulted in a system of agricultural price controls during the years 1862 to 1867. These controls seem to have been intended to (a) protect Utah farmers against the low prices induced by competitive selling; (b) prevent an "invasion" of Utah by miners stimulated by exaggerated reports of mineral finds and bounteous food supplies; and (c) protect Utah consumers against a possible famine induced by heavy selling to traders for sale outside the territory.

Three events led Mormon officials to consider the adoption of a farm price support program in 1862. The first of these was the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Utah had been "occupied" by a force of some three thousand federal troops from 1858 through 1860, the supplying and maintaining of which had attracted hundreds of merchants and freighters.[2] With the recall of these troops in 1860-

[1] In this and other research, the writer is grateful for assistance provided by the Committee on Research in Economic History, of which Professor Thomas C. Cochran is chairman, and Dr. Arthur H. Cole, editor.

[2] See Leland H. Creer, *Utah and the Nation*

1861, most of these traders and suppliers established themselves in Salt Lake City. Their economic function principally consisted of importing goods from the States and selling them for cash and/or the products of Utah's countryside. After the discovery of minerals in Utah and surrounding states in the early 1860's, they engaged largely in supplying mining camps with Utah produce. Brigham Young considered their speculative buying and trading activities to be largely parasitical and destructive of the interests of his followers. He viewed their activity as being primarily concerned with buying grain and other produce in the fall, when the farmer's position was necessitous, and selling in late winter, when the consumer's position was necessitous.[3] The farm price support program was worked out by Brigham Young and others as a technique whereby farmers would receive a "fair price" in the fall, and consumers would pay a "fair price" in the winter, with only "reasonable" profits going to the middlemen.

The second event which led to the adoption of the farm price program was the opening of mines in Idaho, Montana, and Nevada in the early 1860's.[4] The exploitation of these mines required tremendous quantities of foodstuffs and other supplies, the most economical source for much of which was Utah.[5] Attracted by the fabulous prices offered for flour, salt, dried fruits, and butter, the merchants and traders, who had been deprived of their most lucrative market by the withdrawal of federal troops from Utah, entered into this trade with gusto.[6] The most frequently expressed concern of leading Mormons with respect to this trade was the possibility that stocks of foodstuffs in Utah would be dangerously depleted. The Mormon people had several times been on the verge of starvation as the result of cricket and grasshopper infestation, drouth, floods, and early frosts. As there was virtually no way in which food could be imported to meet such contingencies, Mormon leaders had fallen back on an "ever-normal granary" plan by which a carry-over would always be assured. The trade with Idaho, Montana, and Nevada was imperiling this carry-over. Mormon officials, of course, did not attempt and could not have enforced an embargo on the export of food, but they desired and hoped to control it somewhat. Under the farm price support program, Utah farmers were organized and prices were raised sufficiently to discourage a large volume of exports.[7]

In addition to placing checks on competitive selling and the export of food, the farm price support program was also designed to meet certain problems posed by the arrival in Utah of Colonel Patrick Connor and his corps of Third California Volunteers. These troops had been ordered in the fall of 1862 to establish a camp (Camp Douglas) on the east bench overlooking the Salt Lake Valley in order to "keep an eye on Brigham" and the Indians during the Civil War.[8] By encouraging his soldiers to prospect, and by lavish publicity, Colonel Connor managed to start something of a mining boom in Utah. His expressed aim

(Seattle, 1929), 133-160; A. L. Neff, *History of Utah, 1847 to 1869*, edited by Leland H. Creer (Salt Lake City, 1940), 773 ff. The troops were located at Camp Floyd, later Fort Crittenden, which was about forty miles south of Salt Lake City on the west side of Utah Lake. Traders established themselves at the nearby village of Fairfield.

[3] For parts of Brigham Young sermons on this subject in 1860-62, see *Journal of Discourses* (26 vols., Liverpool, 1854-86), 8:280, 318, 343; 9:168-170, 186-188, 271-274; 10:35, 96; also Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter referred to as JH), May 23, 1861, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City.

That Utah farmers agreed with these views is indicated in letters written to *The Deseret News*, The following expression of a Utah County farmer is typical: "Brother Farmers! Can we not come to a noble resolution and unite ourselves together in every ward throughout the country for self protection against the army of sharpers that lie in wait to consume the products of our toil, and fatten upon our sweat and blood?" *The Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), 13:62 (September 16, 1863).

[4] See Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Washington, Idaho, and Montana, 1845-1889* (San Francisco, 1890), 405-406, 621; and *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888* (San Francisco, 1890), 92 ff.

[5] *Seventy Years on the Frontier: Alexander Majors' Memoirs*, edited by Prentiss Ingraham (Chicago, 1893), 224; Alexander Toponce, *Reminiscences* (Ogden, Utah, 1923), 70, 77, 83, 87, *passim;* Jesse Harold Jameson, Corine, Utah, A Study of a Freight Transfer Point in the Montana Trade, 1869 to 1878 (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1951).

[6] Names of several dozen of these men may be found in U. S. Office of Internal Revenue, Utah District, Tax and Assessment lists, in various volumes, 1862-1878, manuscripts, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

[7] There is, of course, the theoretical question as to whether a program of raising prices in Utah would have choked off very much of the Montana trade. Montana prices were fabulously high and the important element in the price was not the cost of the produce in Utah, but the expense and risk of freighting it to Montana.

[8] Fred B. Rogers, *Soldiers of the Overland* (San Francisco, 1938).

in doing so was "to settle the Mormon question by peaceable means"; *i.e.*, by "overwhelming" the Mormons with an army of prospectors, businessmen, and traders.[9] The farm price support program, doubling as a device to establish "fair prices" and prevent excessive exportation, was the official Mormon response to these "threats." If the Colonel wanted to start a rush of miners, here was notice that the rushees would have to pay dearly for their provisions. If well-heeled outside capitalists intended to subvert the Mormon Commonwealth by taking over the opportunities for gain, they were hereby warned that a well-organized community of Mormons would make them pay through the nose for the products of Mormon labor.

The campaign which resulted in the adoption of the price support program began in October 1862, at a meeting of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church, the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the Salt Lake City bishops.[10] Those present at this meeting gave unanimous approval to a proposal "that the brethren of the different Wards of the Territory shall trade [with Camp Douglas and "outside" merchants] through Committees who shall be appointed to trade for them."[11] It was agreed that the prices at which goods were accepted at the church tithing office in Salt Lake City would be regarded for the time being as the prices below which no one should sell. The resolution thus agreed upon was presented by the bishops to their respective congregations the following Sunday. At a subsequent meeting attended by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, the bishops reported that in virtually every instance the people "voted unanimously to sustain whatever measures might be adopted by the [church] authorities," and in particular they supported "the action already taken in reference to regulating prices and controlling the market."[12] The authorities then discussed the tithing office price list, made a few changes, and ordered the list to be published in the official church newspaper, *The Deseret News.*

The program thus initiated in 1862 was continued in 1863. The prime problem of the latter year was a severe drouth which forced Mormon leaders to set up a program of rationing in order to prevent widespread suffering and hunger.[13] Settlers in the grain-producing areas of northern Utah were requested to "Stop the Selling of any more Wheat to the Northern Miners from Salmon River [Idaho] and Bannack City [Montana], for the Wheat was becomeing very Scarce And they Needed All the surplus in S. L. City. . . ."[14] Recognizing, however, that some wheat inevitably would end up in the hands of traders who would transport it north, church officials continued to maintain a higher-than-normal official price level, based on $6.00 per bushel for wheat. Hopes were expressed that these prices would reduce exports, discourage the use of grain for livestock feed, and increase the Mormon "take" from "outside" buyers.[15]

[9] Connor to R. C. Drum, Assistant Adjutant General, U. S. Army, July 21, 1864, cited in *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine* (Salt Lake City), 1:185 (October, 1880); Robert Joseph Dwyer, *The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict, 1862-1890* (Washington, D. C., 1941), 19.

[10] The spiritual and business affairs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) are under the general direction of the "First Presidency," which consists of a president and two "counselors"; and the Council (or Quorum) of Twelve Apostles, the members of which ordinarily serve for life. (Secretary of Agriculture Ezra T. Benson is a member of this group, as was his grandfather of the same name during the 1860's.) The collection of tithing or donations, which in the pioneer period was paid "in kind," was handled by a Presiding Bishop and two counselors by means of an institution called the "tithing office." The spiritual and business head of each local ward (or parish) was a "bishop." Brigham Young was president of the Mormons throughout the period under discussion.

[11] JH, October 26 and 27, 1862.

[12] JH, October 30, 1862.

[13] Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, November 30, 1863, *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* (Liverpool), 26:62 (January 23, 1864). In October 1863, Brigham Young made the following statement: "I will now make a requirement at the hands of the Bishops, both those who are here, and those who are not here and which every individual must see is necessary and just; and that is, for them to see that there is sufficient breadstuff in their respective Wards to last the members of their Wards until another harvest; and if you have not sufficient on hand, we shall require you to secure it and hold it in such a way that the poor can obtain it by paying for it. . . . I wish the Bishops to . . . devise employment, that the newcomers and strangers that may be among us may have a chance to earn their bread. Let sufficient wheat be held in reserve by those who have it, or are able to buy it, for this purpose, that none may suffer." Sermon of October 6, 1863, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:256.

[14] Diary of Henry Ballard, typescript, Utah State Agricultural College Library, Logan, Utah, December 28, 1863.

[15] The latter included Colonel Connor's troops, though at less than official prices. When the Volunteers were on their last fifteen days' rations early in December 1863, the church sold them a considerable supply of wheat at $3.00 per bushel. JH, December 21, 1863; George A. Smith to John L. Smith, JH, January 14, 1864. Mormon generosity on this

While official prices were expected to prevail throughout Utah markets, poor Latter-day Saints were to be provided with food by special arrangement at less than official prices. During the ensuing winter, for example, when the poor in Salt Lake City were beginning to experience real hunger, Brigham Young wrote to wheat-producing settlements, requesting that they send their surplus wheat to the Salt Lake City tithing office. The church would pay $2.00 per bushel for this wheat and sell it to the poor for the same figure. There is no published indication of the amount of wheat thus distributed, but Latter-day Saints in one community (Logan, Utah) shipped to Salt Lake City more than 1,000 bushels of wheat and more than 26 tons of flour for this purpose. The list of donors (and they should be called donors since, at church request, they had turned down $6.00 per bushel for sales destined to the Idaho and Montana mines) includes nearly all tithe-payers in the community.[16]

The close call of the winter of 1863-1864 led church officials to preach the gospel of grain-saving and price-maintenance with renewed vigor during the summer of 1864. In fact, grain-saving became almost an absorbing preoccupation with Brigham Young, and he made many speeches on the subject throughout the territory. In May 1864, for example, he cautioned his followers not to let "outside" speculators buy their grain. When flour was cheap, he said, Latter-day Saints themselves should buy it from those who felt they had to sell. They should do this "if they have to sell the coat off their backs to do it." He continued:

> You were last fall counseled to supply yourselves with breadstuffs, when flour could have been bought for whistling a tune, and the seller would have whistled one half of it to induce you to buy. Why have the children of this world [non-Mormons] been wiser in this day than the children of light [Mormons]?[17]

Joseph Holbrook, who attended one of these meetings devoted to the grain problem, gave the following impression of it in his diary:

> President Young told the people to take care of their grain and not sell it to our enemies or rob ourselves as it was our duty to lay away and store up our wheat a surplus for each year enough for our families and our dependents for seven years to come so that at the expiration of seven years we would have bread for that length of time in our store houses as it was the council of God to His people, for their salvation.[18]

The fear of a food shortage due to grain exportation was one factor which lent a note of urgency to the plans for agricultural price control in the fall of 1864. A second factor was the anticipated heavy migration into Utah and through Utah.[19] A third cause of concern was the effect on the territory of the greenback issues which were circulating with variable discounts throughout the territory. In a letter to Daniel H. Wells in England, Brigham Young expressed the situation as follows:

> The depreciations and fluctuations in the Government currency are causing a very unsettled state of prices here as well as East, and making trade with currency a very uncertain proceeding. To establish a uniform rate of prices, and guard against loss through depreciation, as far as may be possible, a Convention of one Delegate from each grain-raising precinct is called to meet in the Tabernacle, on the second Monday in August next.[20]

Because of the importance church authorities attached to the price maintenance campaign of 1864, they laid plans for the Farm Price Convention with considerable care. More than a month before the Convention was to meet, President Young met with the Council of Twelve Apostles and "instructed them to prepare for the forthcoming convention, and for that purpose to visit the settlements and make necessary arrangements."[21] The following Sunday, and in meetings held throughout the remainder of the month, groups of Mormon authorities met with the church members in the many villages and valleys in the terri-

occasion may have been the result of Christian compassion or, as some have thought, a good sense of public relations.

[16] A complete account of the Cache Valley shipments to aid the Salt Lake City poor is given in the "Logan General Tithing Office Book B, 1864-1865," manuscript in the Cache Stakehouse vault, Logan, Utah. Alexander Toponce recalled that in March 1864, he bought a wagon train of wheat in Utah for eventual sale in Montana at $5.00 per bushel in gold. *Reminiscences*, 83.

[17] Sermon of May 15, 1864, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:293.

[18] Diary, typescript in possession of the writer (2 vols.), 2:16.

[19] This concern was expressed by George A. Smith in a letter to Joseph F. Smith: "We are doing our best to induce the people in the territory to preserve their grain, fearing that the immense emigration passing through and stopping will use up the grain for their animals and so bring on another time of scarcity." JH, July 15, 1864.

[20] Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells, July 16, 1864, *Millennial Star*, 26:604 (September 17, 1864).

[21] JH, July 3, 1864. One of the group, John Taylor, was instructed to draw up a written proposal to submit to the delegates.

tory. In these meetings, they stressed that the farmer ought to be "well paid for his surplus grain," and the Latter-day Saint people ought to "control the prices of the products of their own industry."[22] Elias Smith attended the meeting held in his ward and wrote of it in his diary as follows:

> Attended a ward meeting in the evening which was called for the purpose of electing a delegate to the Convention to be held on the 8th of August for the purpose of determining at what price wheat and other products shall be sold. . . . The meeting was addressed by Elder Theodore McKean and Bishop John Sharp who were in attendance as visiting missionaries to lay the matter of the grain-saving movement before the people, who were unanimous in its approval.[23]

In the days immediately preceding the date set for the Convention, *The Deseret News* carried articles and editorials explaining the economic problems of the Mormon people, as church authorities viewed them, and the necessity and desirability of putting a floor under farm prices. Editor Carrington, a secretary of Brigham Young, and later a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles, articulated official philosophy in the following editorial, which is given in considerable length because of the intelligent discussion of fundamental economic issues which it contains.

> In old settled countries where trade and occupations run in channels well defined by use varying but little for centuries, where keen competition supplies the place of conscience and where the currency or other medium of exchange is stable, it may be very well and perhaps best to permit demand and supply to take care of themselves. But where an isolated people, recently gathered in comparative poverty from varied climes, and of course as yet with no capitalists having means sufficient to control the markets for the just interests of all, and even compelled by the elements to wage battles, at times almost doubtful as to result, for their very existence on a portion of earth so forbidding that no other class would subdue it, the case is widely different. It is also rendered still further anomalous by an annual influx of skilful artisans who, finding no avenues yet open for their trained skill, must of necessity labor at great disadvantage at such employment as may offer. And now, to seriously disturb that portion of stability our market was attaining, a fluctuating currency, daily up and down at the pleasure of Wall Street, has become our sole medium of exchange; and breadstuff stoutly holds itself at high figures, not knowing how many it has to sustain until the harvest of '65. These and numerous kindred facts and circumstances render a Convention upon prices absolutely necessary to prevent so far as possible, overreaching, oppression, chicanery, or loss by either party in trade.
>
> . . . the difficulties . . . will tax all the wisdom and equity the Convention may combine. Food, particularly bread, . . . will have to be very wisely adjusted, for if its price be placed comparatively too high all laborers, except the food producers, will become discouraged and be tempted to abandon the workshop for the farm, which will in great measure stop other improvements and resolve us into a population of farmers and graziers. On the other hand, if the price of food be too low its production is discouraged, the producers seek more remunerative occupations, and scarcity and consequent high prices follow.[24]

It is to be noted that most contemporary anti-Mormon writers interpreted the price-raising program as nothing more than a device to cut wages. Since most public hands, employees of church enterprises, and laboring men generally, were paid in produce or in orders on the church's tithing office, any action which caused tithing office prices or official produce prices to remain above "natural" market prices would have the effect of reducing the real wages of the workmen. By the device of boosting produce prices, according to this view, church leaders were in reality making it possible to carry on public works and other church and private enterprises at cut-rate wages.[25] A cursory examination of the diaries and journals of workmen during this period fails to reveal evidence that any significant number of them believed this to have been the object or effect of church policy. However, church officials were keenly aware of this criticism of the program. A series of editorials in *The Deseret News* attempted to explain to consumers and laborers why they should support the Convention even though admittedly disadvantaged by the higher prices expected to be established when the Convention met:

> The staple product of this community is grain. We are an agricultural people. The prosperity of the merchant, the mechanic and the tradesman is but the natural adjunct of the prosperity of the agriculturist, following after and depending upon it. So long as a mutual system of trade was carried on between producers . . . and the market was altogether, or nearly so, a home one, it did not matter much what nominal price was put upon agricultural produce.
>
> But the breadstuffs which then passed into the hands of those who had business transactions outside of the community, were received by them at a price miserably unremunerative. . . . [The result was] to enrich a few at the expense of the many . . . the mercantile class leaped into the possession of

[22] *The Deseret News*, 13:329 (July 13, 1864).

[23] Diary of Elias Smith, July 28, 1864, microfilm copy in possession of Utah State Historical Society, State Capitol, Salt Lake City.

[24] *The Deseret News*, 13:344 (July 27, 1864).

[25] See, *e.g.*, Mrs. Catharine V. Waite, *The Mormon Prophet and His Harem* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1866), 139-141.

affluence. . . . A large and increasing export market has been opened—one that threatened to leave us without breadstuffs . . . unless some measures are adopted to check the heavy drain upon our produce. And, in supplying that market, the lion's share of the profits would, as heretofore, fall, not into the hands of the producers, but into the safes of a few who can buy, store and demand their price. . . .

But would not the law of supply and demand regulate the price without a convention? Undoubtedly it would, eventually; but to whose advantage? The producer's? We question it. With a newly-gathered harvest, and full bins, the evil day would appear so distant that a large portion of the present harvest would pass out of the hands of those who raised it, in a short time, and at unremunerative rates. Again, the settlements are dotted over an extensive tract of country, with, in many instances, limited mail facilities, and no telegraph. Sharp operators can watch every change and fluctuation of the market, and before the producer could be aware, with superior advantages in obtaining information, could make heavy purchases and pocket immense profits to the disadvantage of the producers.[26]

The editorial then goes on to say that, while mechanics and laboring men could expect to pay higher prices for the necessaries of life, they should not regard this temporary drop in their real wages as adverse to their best interests. Nor should they consider organizing to strike for higher wages. Farmers receiving higher incomes under the price-raising program would be able to hire more laborers and pay higher wages. Thus, the higher food prices would ultimately benefit mechanics and laborers without any necessity for them to take action on their own behalf.[27]

The Convention met on August 8, 1864, and continued for three days. Some one hundred and twenty delegates from town and country were present. The Convention formed itself into a formal organization, elected the Presiding Bishop of the church as president, and committees were appointed to draft resolutions. The Convention was predominantly composed of ecclesiastical, business, and agricultural leaders, but laboring men were also invited to address the group. President Young asserted that "this convention belongs to Israel [*i.e.*, the Mormon people]," and requested "mechanics and all or any of the brethren to speak their sentiments."[28] At the commencement of the deliberations on the second day, the price committee read its report, which contained the following preamble:

History of the past shows to us that well regulated Governments, States and Communities have provided and secured the "Staff of Life" for the sustenance of the people, and,

Whereas, our isolated location and liability of our crops being destroyed by drouth, frost, insects and other visitations, have given us an experience unusual in other regions and have learned us that both propriety and duty require us to advise and follow that course of deal and policy best calculated for self-preservation, and,

Whereas, The productions of the country are a necessity touching the very existence of our settlements in these mountain valleys, and,

Whereas, Humanity requires us to take into consideration the wants of the present population and the incoming emigration of many thousands, and,

Whereas, We have nought upon which to rely but the present harvest, already in many places seriously lessened by drouth and frost,

Therefore, To provide for the present, and further necessities of ourselves and dependents and to save our wheat from being fed to animals and retained in the country to be distributed to the needy in time of scarcity, we recommend that the following prices (in Government currency when it is at par, increasing that price to correspond with the premium on gold) be adopted and sustained.

In the adoption of the prices hereinafter named, your committee are of the opinion that mechanical and other labor will best regulate itself. . . .[29]

The committee then suggested the adoption of a long schedule of prices which included controls over grain, potatoes and other vegetables, dairy products, poultry products, meats, molasses, and hay. Flour, the most important item, was priced at $12.00 per hundred, to be compared with the "customary" pioneer price of $6.00 per hundred. Wheat was set at $5.00 per bushel; corn at $4.00. After a prolonged discussion, the Convention decided to strike most of the vegetables from the list because it was "impracticable to affix any price that would be applicable in every part of the Territory" on such items whose values varied greatly from place to place and from day to day. On motions of city delegates, freighting ($2.00 per 100 lbs. for 100 miles) and dried fruit were added to the controls.[30] Considerable discussion ensued on the wisdom of setting a standard price for hay, and a majority finally voted to leave it under the control.[31]

[26] *The Deseret News*, 13:344 (July 27, 1864).

[27] Interferences in market processes by labor were clearly undesirable, according to the "official" view; while "interferences" on behalf of farmers were beneficial. It was explained that "as the staple product of any community is in a prosperous or depressed condition, . . . so is the prosperity of the community, as a whole, in a proportionate ratio." *The Deseret News*, 13:344 (July 27, 1864); 13:352 (August 3, 1864).

[28] *Ibid.*, 13:366 (August 17, 1864).

[29] *Ibid.*, 13:366 (August 17, 1864).

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Brigham Young's observations on the Convention are given in a letter written some three weeks

The Convention agreed to reassemble in October 1864, on the occasion of the semi-annual general conference of the church, to review the prices finally established. At that time, the delegates reported that most of the Latter-day Saints in the various settlements were favorable to the price schedule drawn up by the Convention in August. Alterations were made in the prices of oats, barley, and potatoes; and eggs and cheese, beets and carrots were stricken from the list of controlled commodities. Flour was to remain at $12.00 per hundred, and wheat at $5.00 per bushel.[32]

Several months after the adoption of the 1864 uniform price list, and when winter was upon the Saints, their leader summarized the results of their common-action policy as follows:

> The holding of the Convention for the regulation of the prices of grain has been attended with excellent effects. Flour and grain have sold at remunerative prices, and the farmers have been able, by the sale of their produce, to furnish their families with many comforts which would have been beyond their reach had there not been an united effort to keep up the prices. This has not been the only advantage. Speculators and others in the adjacent Territories have exerted themselves to obtain flour and grain from other quarters, instead of depending wholly upon us, which they would have done had they thought that they could have obtained provisions at the old prices.[33]

> We have proposed many things with regard to our temporal affairs in these valleys which, when strictly obeyed, have been attended with great benefits. Our action touching our grain has greatly benefited this community; it has resulted in replenishing the wardrobes of the people throughout the Territory, and placed in their possession many thousands of dollars.[34]

The Deseret News also carried a lengthy editorial which reviewed the activities of the Convention and summarized the effects upon the community of the price schedules and the grain-saving movement. Compared with the "gloomy prospect" of the previous year, it asserted, "Prosperity is witnessed and enjoyed on every hand. . . . There are sufficient breadstuffs in the country to amply supply all our internal wants until next harvest." The control measures had successfully prevented a depletion in the carry-over, and the higher prices had stimulated production. Even the laborer, continued the editorial, despite predictions by "interested parties" to the contrary, was "in a better condition now than he was twelve months ago."[35]

General satisfaction with the program evidently continued because in April 1865, at the conclusion of the annual general conference of the church in Salt Lake City, the "Convention for the regulation of the prices of produce" met, heard reports from the various delegates, and "sustained and adopted" the prices of the preceding Convention without much debate.[36] Again in October, at the conclusion of the semi-annual general conference of the church, the delegates once more convened. Brigham Young, who as president of the church had conducted the sessions of the general conference, also presided over the

later to Mormon authorities in England: "On the 8th inst., delegates from the various election precincts throughout the Territory, met in Convention in the Tabernacle in this City, to consider the propriety of establishing the prices of certain articles, chiefly produce. This step was deemed necessary to preserve within our borders the subsistence needed for ourselves and the destitute who may come here before another harvest, and to place the price of produce at figures comparatively more remunerative to farmers. The Convention, on the 3rd day of its session, after establishing the price of flour at $12.00 a 100 in gold, or its equivalent, wheat $5 a bushel, hay $25 a ton, &c., adjourned to meet on the 4th of October next." Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells and Brigham Young, Jr., August 31, 1864, *Millennial Star*. 26:717 (November 5, 1864).

[32] *The Deseret News,* 14:18 (October 19, 1864). Alexander Toponce claimed to have bought a wagon train of Mormon flour during the latter part of October 1864, at $24 per cwt. Flour was selling in Montana at the time, he wrote, for $125 per cwt. in gold. *Reminiscences*, 87-88.

[33] Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells and Brigham Young, Jr., December 5, 1864, *Millennial Star,* 27:62 (January 28, 1865). A mill owner's impression was slightly less roseate. Esaias Edwards, writing in his journal under the date of November 25, 1864, stated: "The Harvest turned out uncommon wel[l] and there is bread stuff enough on hand to last two years if it is all kept in the country but the prospect is that it will be a great deal of it taken to the mines . . . the people most generally covented [covenanted] to sustain the prices [but] there is many that have broken there [their] covenants some through Covetousness and some through poverty or necessity." Diary and Writings of Esaias Edwards, 1812-1897, typescript, Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah.

[34] Sermon of December 11, 1864, *The Deseret News,* 14:99 (December 28, 1864). Grains, of course, were not the only commodities produced in excess and sold in large quantities to passing emigrants and mining regions. According to one observer, some two hundred thousand pounds of dried peaches alone were sold by the Mormons in Idaho and Montana in 1864. Dried peaches were fixed at 75 cents a pound by the Convention. See Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent* (Springfield, Massachusetts, 1865), 94.

[35] *The Deseret News,* 14:140 (February 1, 1865).

[36] Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells and Brigham Young, Jr., April 10, 1865, *Millennial Star,* 27:349 (June 3, 1865).

Convention. In doing so, he said that he "appeared as the representative of God in this convention as much as yesterday at conference." He added that the "convention [was] organized not to aggrandise anyone. Remember it was not Brigham Young that set the price at the convention. It is not whether flour be $6 or $12 per hundred, the main object is to get the people united in doing right in temporal things." A motion was made to sustain the Convention prices of the preceding fall, and this was passed unanimously.[37]

During the weeks following the adjournment of the October Convention, it became increasingly difficult to maintain prices within the territory at the official level. This was particularly true with respect to flour, which was more abundant than had been generally predicted. Although the Convention price of $12.00 per hundred had been approved at the October meeting, report was made that it was widely sold at half that figure. Church leaders therefore decided to make tithing office prices conform to the more realistic market level and reduced flour to $6.00 per hundred.[38] The Convention was "on the way out," and April 9, 1866, was the last date on which it was to meet. On that occasion, President Young moved that it be dissolved to make way for a different type of control device—the Utah Produce Company. When the purposes and functions of the Utah Produce Company were explained to the delegates, they "unanimously sustained" the motion of their leader and a three-and-one-half-year experiment in price-fixing was ended.[39]

However, the dissolution of the Price Convention did not mean the end of grain valorization in Utah. The problem of "excessive" competition among farmers remained, and the loss in incomes to "outside speculators" continued to bother leading church officials. The Utah Produce Company represented an attempt to meet these problems in a "capitalistic" manner. The favorable prices during the three successive seasons of Convention control had encouraged an increased output of grain and other produce. There was no longer grave danger of famine;[40] a considerable supply could be exported. In fact, without exportation, a favorable price in Utah might not be maintained. A decision was made to place export trade under the control of "the brethren." Under their leadership, freighting and marketing associations could be organized which would attempt valorization by organized disposal of the domestic surplus at remunerative prices.[41]

The Utah Produce Company represented the consummation of a plan about which leading Mormons had been thinking as early as the summer of 1865.[42] The editor of *The Deseret News* discussed the proposition in a series of editorials in November 1865:

> Can we not do our own freighting? This is a question which owners of wagons and teams are asking our merchants and which merchants are asking in return. It is suggested that the freight bill of the past season, amounting to about half a million in round numbers, might be as well saved to the people of the Territory in another season. We freight

[37] JH, October 10, 1865.

[38] Writing from Salt Lake City on November 14, 1865, Christoffer Kempe reported: "Here is great abundance of foodstuffs, and 100 pounds of flour costs now only 6 dollars." Kempe to Widerborg, *Skandinaviens Stjerne* (Copenhagen), 15:122 (January 15, 1866), translated and called to the writer's attention by Professor William Mulder of the University of Utah.

[39] *The Deseret News*, 15:145 (April 12, 1866). Although this action dissolved the territorial Price Convention, other local conventions met intermittently to control prices locally. For example, in August 1869, 44 delegates from the various precincts in Utah County met in Provo for the purpose of setting prices of "agricultural and other products, also mechanical and other labor." *Ibid.*, 18:341 (August 25, 1869).

[40] However, *The Deseret News*, 16:350 (December 13, 1867), contained an editorial on "Grain-Saving Policy," which stated that because of their inland position the Mormon people could hardly hope to import food if they should have a crop failure. Although a shortage was not anticipated, said the *News*, the Saints are counselled to have a one-year's supply on hand just in case.

[41] No doubt an immediate reason for the formation of the company was the desire to take fullest advantage of some of the prices being offered in Idaho and Montana. It was reported that the price of flour in one Idaho camp had gone up to $75.00 per 100 lbs., while Virginia City, Montana, prices were reported to be $18 to $20 per cwt. of flour; $22 per cwt. sifted corn meal; $35 per cwt. salt; 45 cents per lb. of peaches. *The Deseret News*, 15:100 (January 4, 1866); 15:165 (April 26, 1866); 15:181 (May 10, 1866).

[42] In giving "Instructions . . . to the people of Box Elder and Cache Counties" in August 1865, Brigham Young counselled: "Why not appoint in every ward of the Territory a good business man, who is filled with integrity and truth, to make contracts for the people of the ward, and let the convention prices be the rule or not sell? Why not draw money for our grain and spend it ourselves, instead of allowing those who have no interest with us to handle it for us and pocket fortunes which we should enjoy and lay out in redeeming the earth and in building up the kingdom of God in all the world? We can do this if we will." *Ibid.*, 14:386 (September 6, 1865).

from the east and the west; we freight to the north; there are hundreds of wagons through the Territory that could be used for this purpose, an abundance of oxen, horses and mules that could do the work, and yet the freight of the goods brought here is paid in money to be taken out of the Territory, when, with a mutual understanding between merchants and men who could do freighting, it might be profitably spent in the best markets, to the benefit of the Territory in general and those who did the freighting in particular. . . .

If it would not pay one man to send one or two or three wagons, a settlement, city or locality might unite together and send what teams they could spare, under the charge of an experienced captain, with careful and efficient teamsters. . . . We would encourage our people to do their own freighting and trading. . . .[43]

Four months later, in February 1866, while the Price Convention regulations were still in effect, the Utah Produce Company was organized. Its purpose, reported the church historian, was "to regulate the price of flour and supply the northern mining regions."[44] The organization was completed in succeeding days, and a Prospectus and Constitution were readied to present to Price Convention delegates at their April 1866 meeting. The Prospectus, which was read by George Q. Cannon to the delegates, gave the following explanation of the organization of the Utah Produce Company:

The excessive fluctuations in the price of the products of this Territory, and of Flour more particularly, that have hitherto occurred, have operated alike injuriously to both the producer and the consumer, until it has become a matter of necessity that some efficient action be taken to remedy this evil, and secure to the citizens of this and adjacent Territories, as nearly as the nature of circumstances will permit, a uniform price for a reliable brand of flour. And inasmuch as all previous efforts to accomplish this, have been at best partially successful, (consequent upon their being based on individual action, and the necessities of many having compelled them to sell flour at a sacrifice, that the condition of the market did not warrant;) we now propose that a Company be formed, of sufficient capital to obviate the necessity of selling, except at a fair price; and thus to insure to the producer, remunerative rates for his products, and at the same time to supply our neighbors constantly, with a first class article of flour, at a price so low as to supersede the necessity of its importation from California, Oregon, or the Missouri river. . . . For the accomplishment of this end, we recommend the formation of similar Companies in the principal settlements of this Territory, which, to work harmoniously, it is deemed important should act in unison with and under the direction of this the parent association.

It is also proposed that this Company act as Storage and Commission Merchants, both in this city and in Montana, to receive flour and other produce from the companies to be formed in the various settlements, as well as from individuals, and, as soon as the finances of this Company will permit, to make advances on all consignments.[45]

In other words, the Utah Produce Company was a joint-stock company organized to accomplish certain social objectives and at the same time yield a profit to its cooperators. Every farmer and produce dealer was encouraged to join. Those who had no cash were permitted to subscribe flour and/or freight, since it was hoped that these could be converted quickly into money. The authorized capitalization was $100,000, although it is not known whether it reached that figure.[46] The church's investment in the enterprise, if any, is impossible to determine, but the formation of the company was under the supervision of the church First Presidency; the president of the company was the Presiding Bishop of the Church, Edward Hunter; and the directors of the company were all prominent Mormon merchants and businessmen.[47] Moreover, the objectives of the company were social rather than private in nature. According to official statements by Brigham Young and others, these objectives were:

1. To supply Montana and Idaho with flour and other surplus produce at remunerative and uniform, yet moderate, fair, and reasonable prices.
2. To prevent, by organization, the unwise and unnecessary competition of Latter-day Saints with one another in disposing of their products in Idaho and Montana, for such competition has enabled speculators to take advantage of them in their dealings, without compensating benefit to consumers in Idaho and Montana.
3. To prevent excessive price fluctuation.[48]

[43] *Ibid.*, 15:60 (November 2, 1865); 15:100 (January 4, 1866). The urgings of this editorial and of church leaders in the October general conference and local conferences caused churchmen in many localities to combine into mercantile and freighting associations.

[44] JH, February 26, 1866; Diary of Samuel W. Richards, typescript, Brigham Young University Library, entries for February and March, 1866.

[45] *The Deseret News*, 15:136 (March 29, 1866).

[46] *Ibid.*, 15:128 (March 22, 1866); 15:136 (March 29, 1866); Brigham Young to George A. Smith and Erastus Snow, JH, March 5, 1866.

[47] The directors were Abraham O. Smoot, Horace S. Eldredge, Henry W. Lawrence, William S. Godbe, and William Jennings (later replaced by John Sharp). *The Deseret News*, 15:112 (March 8, 1866).

[48] Brigham Young to Brigham Young, Jr., February 27, 1866, *Millennial Star*, 28:238 (April 14, 1866); JH, March 7, 1866; Brigham Young to George A. Smith and Erastus Snow, JH, March 5, 1866. Also see a discussion of the objectives of the company in *The Deseret News*, 15:172 (May 3, 1866).

A complete record of the activities of the Utah Produce Company in attempting to carry out these and possible other objectives is impossible to obtain,[49] but it is known that the company did dispatch trains of freight to Montana in 1866.[50] One clue to the firm's success is given by Brigham Young in a sermon on the economic problems of the Saints, delivered in February 1867, almost a year after the organization of the company:

> With regard to the wealth of this people, I can say they would soon get immensely rich if they would take the counsel that is given them. . . . we have quite an outlet for our grain; our oats, barley and flour are very much wanted in the neighboring Territories. Who raised this grain? The Latter-day Saints. Suppose they were perfectly united, do you not think they could get a suitable price for it? They could. We required bro. Hunter [the Presiding Bishop] to counsel the Bishops to take measures to bring about union in this direction [meaning, presumably, the Utah Produce and similar companies], and we saved for the Territory two or three hundred thousand dollars a year for two or three years. Then business slackened; but I was satisfied; we had shown the people what could be done; they have become comparatively well off.[51]

Whatever its successes and failures, the Utah Produce Company and similar local companies disappeared with the advent of the transcontinental railroad in 1868-1869.[52] Several attempts were made by church authorities after 1868 to use the agency of the church to promote the supposed economic welfare of its members, but the return to market control was almost complete by 1900. Ecclesiastical influence and a measure of central planning remained, but they did not represent the extensive "interferences" of the period before 1869. The industrial, mining, and agricultural development provided by the railroad, the growth of specialization and diversification, the introduction of new products, markets, and processes, and the enforcement of anti-Mormon legislation—all of these combined to force the abandonment of ecclesiastical direction of pricing processes in territorial Utah.

In summing up the Mormon experience with agricultural pricing during the 1860's, it is clear that Brigham Young and his associates felt that their adventures in price stabilization, though at times partaking more of the nature of exhortation than of control, were better calculated to protect the community from want, injustice, and instability than abject surrender to an uncertain, and at times unfavorable, market.[53] Mormon leaders apparently doubted that a larger measure of spontaneity and flexibility in pricing and marketing, such as that which generally characterized contemporary American agricultural markets, would have been more favorable to the Mormon economy. However, it seems likely that Brigham Young held no brief for price authoritarianism as a policy principle, and that his farm price support program was simply a device to alter the prevailing, and in some respects unique, institutional setting in favor of the majority of his hard-working followers. At any rate, he demonstrated an inclination to use the price system, whenever possible, to achieve given group objectives, both economic and non-economic. As one phase of a complex and worldly-wise policy-structure designed to advance the "Kingdom of God" in the Rocky Mountains, agricultural price control seems to have been intended to protect Utah's pioneer farmers, if not its consumers and merchants, from the risks and unwanted changes of a frontier in flux.

[49] The ownership, purchases, sales, length of operation, and profits, if any, are all phases of the company's operations, an analysis of which will have to await the discovery of the company's ledger and account books.

[50] *The Deseret News*, 15:197 (May 24, 1866). Also see the company's advertisements in the *News* throughout the summer of 1866.

[51] Sermon of February 3, 1867, *ibid.*, 16:83 (March 13, 1867).

[52] However, a flourishing freighting business between Ogden and later Corinne (the northernmost point of the Union Pacific line) and Butte, Montana, continued until 1879. This business seems to have been handled by private enterprise, or at least by companies outside the orbit of church interest.

[53] It was the view of Albert Carrington, as expressed in a notable editorial, that an unregulated and uncontrolled price system was simply an institution which could be manipulated by selfish interests and combinations to the detriment of the general interest. "Supply and Demand—Class Interests," *The Deseret News*, 15:268 (July 26, 1866).

FARM LOANS AND FARM MANAGEMENT BY THE EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES*

F. J. SKOGVOLD

Farm Mortgage Department, Equitable Life Assurance Society

This is a brief account of how a large business institution met the economic challenge presented by the rapid, unprecedented, and undesired acquisition of over a million acres of farm land.

It is simultaneously a case study in large-scale, though temporary, agricultural landlordism and a description of a huge real estate liquidation job. It is, perhaps, of primary interest here as an unusual illustration of the exercise of business enterprise.

The economic developments resulting in widespread farm foreclosure in the early 1930's have been fully described by others. I will not go into that. Nor do I intend to discuss the social and economic implications of this trying episode in the history of agricultural credit, important as they are.

These aspects of the foreclosure period have received much more attention than has the operation and disposition of the properties acquired in settlement of defaulted mortgages. I shall briefly describe the experience of the Equitable Life Assurance Society and review some major questions of policy which had to be considered.

But first a bit of orientation.

Farm mortgages have been considered excellent investments since the mid-1800's. They still are. Witness the intense competitive scramble for such loans today by many large institutional lenders. Life insurance companies were important sources of farm mortgage credit from the start. Equitable entered the field in 1912. By the end of 1931, it had $197 million outstanding in farm mortgages—14 per cent of total Equitable investments. It ranked third among U. S. life company farm lenders.

Foreclosed farm real estate had not been a problem for the Equitable up to that time. True, it owned 430 farms with a book value of $3.7 million, but that was less than 2 per cent of its farm loan investment. Other life company lenders had already been forced to acquire farm real estate representing as much as 19 per cent of their loans. Combined farm holdings of 18 of the major companies totaled $168 million in December 1931.

But the stage was being set for the drama that followed. Delinquencies rapidly increased in number until in 1933, 49 per cent of all Equitable farm loans were in serious default. Other lenders faced a similar problem. With little improvement in economic conditions, distress farm transfers in the nation rose to an all-time high of 38.8 per thousand in 1932, compared to 16 per thousand in 1929. In the four years from 1933 through 1936, Equitable acquired 5,035 farms. By December 1938, total Equitable farm holdings had risen to a peak of 6,065 units containing more than 1.1 million acres. This represented an investment of $68 million. Equitable had thus become almost as much a farm landlord as it was a farm lender, for its mortgage portfolio had shrunk to $71 million.

Equitable was not alone in this, of course. Total debt-acquired farm real estate in 1938 amounted to about $934 million. Life company lenders owned about $612 million of this total. Federal and joint-stock land banks, which generally sold foreclosed farms within a year of acquisition, held $194 million at the end of 1938. Commercial banks owned $56

* This paper was presented at the joint session of the Agricultural History Society with the American Historical Association in Washington, D. C., December 28, 1955.

Data for this paper are based primarily on internal company records such as annual reports, interoffice correspondence, and field surveys. In addition, considerable assistance was received from individuals who were active participants in the management programs described. There are many general studies of the farm foreclosure period of the 1930's from which readers may obtain a general picture of the developments with time. Two may be mentioned: Lawrence A. Jones and David Durand, *Mortgage Lending Experience in Agriculture* (National Bureau of Economic Research, Studies in Agricultural Finance, No. 1, Princeton, 1954) and Archibald Woodruff, Jr., *Farm Mortgage Loans of Life Insurance Companies* (New Haven, 1937).

million while the state-operated rural credit agencies in North and South Dakota and Minnesota held the balance of $72 million.

Equitable-owned farms, in 1938, were concentrated in 17 states largely in the Middle West, where most of the loans had been made. In one state alone, Equitable owned more than 50 farms in each of 14 counties.

This heavy concentration was both an advantage and a disadvantage. It simplified management but complicated liquidation and maintenance of good public relations. Many management and sale techniques evolved in later years were greatly influenced by this single factor of concentration.

Obviously, the situation that faced the Equitable as acquisitions continued to mount called for positive action. In 1935, a new department was established to conduct farm real estate and mortgage operations which had previously been handled by the City Real Estate Department. Nils A. Olsen, then Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture, was brought in to direct it. A thoroughly practical man for all his research background, Mr. Olsen considered his new assignment a challenge and an opportunity. With almost inexhaustible capacity for work, he proceeded to make the Equitable's farm mortgage problems his own until his premature death in 1940. Responsibility for carrying on the work he had started was assummed by his chief assistant, R. I. Nowell, who had also been associated with the Department of Agriculture in various capacities. Mr. Nowell still directs Equitable's farm lending activities as vice-president in charge of the Farm Mortgage Department.

One of Mr. Olsen's first acts was to make a comprehensive field survey of the situation in company with the head of the Equitable's City Mortgage Department, Glenn McHugh. As a result, several fundamental propositions were established.

First, management's primary obligation was to policyholders. Fulfilment of contractual insurance obligations was based on the investment of reserves, part of which was represented by the farms acquired. However, policies and procedures aimed at recovering this investment should be worked out with full recognition of the possible effect on others having an interest in the properties, such as tenants on the farms and the communities in which the farms were located.

Another basic decision was that farms should be sold for their real value, not merely the cost to the Equitable. This was essential because unavoidable losses on some farms should be offset wherever possible by profits on others.

Despite fears expressed in some quarters, no one ever gave serious consideration to permanent ownership and operation of the acquired properties. This was not only prohibited by insurance law, but it also became apparent early that multiple farm ownership was not a suitable type of investment for an insurance company.

With these basic concepts established, the next major decision was when and how to liquidate. Some lenders in a similar predicament decided to sell immediately even though land values were abnormally low and painful losses were certain to be suffered. Equitable policy called for the sale of any farm at any time but only when an offer somewhere near its intrinsic value and with an adequate downpayment could be obtained. Not many such offers were received until the late 1930's.

This brings us to Equitable's management and rehabilitation activities while waiting for the economy to right itself.

Most of the farms acquired represented "aggravated cases of assault" on the soil, the buildings, and the fences due to the circumstances of their acquisition. A substantial additional investment in repairs and improvements by the Equitable was required to attract good tenants and stimulate the interest of prospective buyers.

Working through regional branch offices and 80 to 85 full-time, agriculturally trained fieldmen, the Equitable rented its farms to the best tenants obtainable. Out of a multiplicity of lease forms previously in use, the department developed five written contracts which covered the various types of farming and legal situations. Almost all were put on the crop-share rental basis, since this provided a fairer distribution of production and price risks between landlord and tenant, and also enabled both to participate in the increased production which could be expected from improved management methods.

Since every farm was always for sale, at least in theory, management sought not only to increase its productivity and attractiveness but also to avoid doing anything that might reduce its marketability. To be able to give a prospective buyer possession for the coming crop year, and to be able to do so as late as possible in the current year were major bargaining tools in the sales program. For that reason, one-year leases were almost univer-

sally used by the Equitable and other multiple owners of foreclosed farms. For that reason, also, leases written for the coming crop season contained a provision cancelling the contract in the event the farm was sold by a specified date before the new lease year started.

The Equitable was keenly aware of the impact of this leasing policy on the tenancy problem and made an effort to minimize it by holding some vacated farms open until later in the season for use of tenants whose farms had been sold.

Before long, however, the Equitable was caught between two opposing pressure groups. On the one hand, there was widespread agitation, especially in Iowa, to force the use of longer term leases providing more security for tenants. On the other hand, there were repeated demands that corporate landowners speed up their farm sales program.

Efforts in Iowa to improve tenure culminated in 1939 when a law was enacted which automatically renewed all existing leases unless notice of termination was given by November 1. After sudying its effect on the sales program, Equitable decided the only way it could operate under this law was to terminate all Iowa leases as of November 1 each year. Tenants to be retained for the lease year beginning the following March were simultaneously advised that new leases would be drawn up with them. Since the cancellation date previously in use gave tenants three month's notice when their farm was sold and they had to relinguish possession to a new owner, the net effect of the law, therefore, was to give an Iowa tenant an additional month's notice that the farm he had rented might have to be vacated when his current lease expired.

Turning from tenure problems to cropping plans, it was determined early that sound rotations would be required. An analysis of leases prepared from 1939 to 1945, indicates that an average of 35 per cent of the cultivated acreage had been planted to corn. This was a reasonable proportion considering the fact that Society-owned property was predominantly corn-belt land. Legumes and grass were grown on 15 per cent of the combined acreage during this period. In this connection, the Equitable purchased over $1,645,000 worth of alfalfa, clover, and other legume and grass seeds to carry out the planned rotations. Substantial quantities of limestone and fertilizer were also supplied.

Soil-building efforts of a more spectacular nature were made in some of the areas hard hit by wind erosion. One such project in Beadle County, South Dakota, received considerable publicity in 1938 as a result of an article on it in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Fortunately, the Equitable acquired relatively few properties in the dust bowl areas.

Somewhat similar in character was a special bindweed eradication program carried out in parts of South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska. Bindweed was a serious farming and sales problem before the days of 2,4-D and other chemical weed-killers. Several duck-foot cultivators were purchased and tractor operators hired to work systematically on selected fields. The results were generally favorable.

Another constructive management project was the installation of irrigation wells in the Platte River Valley of Nebraska. This involved a substantial pioneering investment which many individual farm owners could not make at the time. Yields of irrigated corn were in sharp contrast to returns on nonirrigated land and served to dramatize the value of pump irrigation in the area.

A challenge of a different kind confronted the managers of Equitable's 6,000 farms in 1939 when the Agricultural Adjustment Administration changed its rules regarding multiple landowners. From the beginning of the acreage restriction program, the Society complied and thereby "earned" an average of $275,000 annually from 1934 through 1938. I put "earned" in quotes because many of the rotations independently established during those years automatically came within the prescribed acreage allotments.

By 1939, the highly publicized $10,000 limitation on conservation payments made to any one owner became effective. Irrespective of the justification for such a limitation, it required a careful analysis of the Equitable's position on future compliance. This was especially true since many farms had been restored to high productivity and could begin to return some of the investment made in soil-building. Weighing all factors, it was decided that 1939 leases would be written on the basis of sound rotations for each farm without reference to corn acreage allotments. However, a sufficient number of Equitable farms were in compliance during the year to qualify it for $187,000 in parity payments plus the $10,000 permitted in conservation payments.

In 1941, with Europe at war and the United States teetering on the brink, the acreage restriction program definitely appeared to be out of step with the march of events. Equit-

able wrote its leases for the year on the basis of 140 per cent of corn acreage allotments, incurring the expressed disapproval of AAA officials in the process. A few months later, national corn allotments were raised 10 per cent and proposed penalties were eliminated on over-plantings up to 140 per cent of the allotment. This was the beginning of the Food-For-Freedom campaign. Thereafter, crop planning took on a quite different emphasis.

Marketing crop-share rentals totalling up to $5 million annually constituted still another field for the exercise of managerial techniques. Small grains were generally sold at harvest. Corn, however, revealed enough price variation to justify delayed marketing. It is estimated that delayed marketing, requiring storage of share corn on the farm either in permanent or temporary cribs, yielded a net gain to the Equitable of at least $500,000 above the returns obtainable at harvest of the 1938, 1939, and 1940 corn crops.

It should be emphasized here that accurate, timely, and properly designed reports and records are an absolute essential in the detailed management of as complex an organism as 6,000 individual farms. The successful marketing of crop rentals, for example, depended on a steady flow of production, inventory, and sales reports. One of the major contributions to the management effort was the development of a system of farm revenue reports on a crop year basis. Without them the intelligent direction of thousands of tenants would have been impossible.

Thus far, we have not mentioned the Equitable's farm building repair program.

A comprehensive survey in 1938 revealed that at least 2,800 farms needed major repairs and about 2,500 sets of buildings should be painted before effective sale of the properties could be made. Management determined that it would take at least four years to get this job done if methods then in use were continued. The decision was made to accelerate both repairing and painting to finish the job in three years, or by the end of 1941. This turned out to be especially fortunate, for wartime construction and travel restrictions imposed in 1942 would have made completion of it very costly and difficult, if not impossible.

An agricultural engineer experienced in construction work headed the repair program in the field. A staff of salaried repair fieldmen was assembled to prepare specifications during winter months.

After analysis of alternate methods, it was determined that repair work should be done by carpenter crews hired for the entire working season and placed on Equitable's payroll. By 1940, about 70 such crews of 5 to 6 men each, plus a foreman, were at work. Savings of at least 10 per cent in labor costs were effected in this manner. Carlot purchases of lumber, shingles, cement, and other building materials were also made at 7 to 12 per cent reduction from the prices generally quoted insurance companies and other multiple landowners.

A total of 2,860 major repair programs had been completed by the end of 1941 at an overall outlay of $3.1 million, an average of about $1,100 per farm.

Experiments in 1938 with a spray paint outfit revealed that substantial labor savings could be made without sacrificing quality. The following year five two-gun spray outfits were purchased. The fleet was expanded to 12 units in 1940. Each unit consisted of a truck with a two-wheel trailer carrying the compressor. Box bodies on the trucks contained four bunks for crew members who stayed on the farm until they finished applying a coat of paint. This materially cut painting time since the men did not have to travel several miles to town at night for lodging, and then drive back the following morning. Labor savings on the three-year spray paint program amounted to at least $75,000 over the conventional brush method.

Paint was purchased in bulk using laboratory analyses of samples obtained from several leading manufacturers. Thus quality was assured and savings of about $50,000 over usual purchasing methods were effected.

Still another aspect of management is revealed by a brief review of how insurance on farm buildings was handled. A detailed analysis in 1938 of the loss experience for six previous years indicated that premium costs were far out of line with the risk. An average of about $125,000 annually had been paid for the usual fire and windstorm coverage. Study of weather department records of fires and tornados in areas where most of the farms were located, and the fact that a large number of properties were dispersed, confirmed the belief that the Equitable should become a self-insurer. Accordingly, policies expiring after March 1939 were not renewed. By 1943, the Society was on a fully self-insured basis.

A comparison of actual losses sustained with what the renewals would have cost showed to-

tal savings of $152,000 by this single management decision.

One further comment on the repair program may be of special interest here. It has to do with rural electrification. The urgent need for basic structural repairs to preserve buildings, construct fences, dig wells, etc., put electrification work at the bottom of the list of things to do. Though there was no difference of opinion between REA and the Equitable regarding the value of farm electrification, it was a matter of taking care of first things first. That the Equitable did not move into rural electrification as rapidly as REA desired was amply made known to the management. However, standard wiring specifications were prepared by Equitable and a substantial number of the better farms were electrified. From March 1938 to the end of 1941 nearly 500 sets of buildings were wired, most of them in Iowa.

Turning now to the selling job, it was stated in one of the first policy instructions issued to the field force that "every Society-owned farm is available for sale at a price." That did not mean dumping them on the already abnormal market, however, and incurring needless losses when many of the properties were fundamentally worth more if sold in an orderly manner.

During the entire management period bulletins were issued at regular intervals informing the field force on sales progress and urging special effort to dispose of the lower grade farms, isolated farms, farms in poor areas where new loans were not being solicited, and farms in areas of heaviest concentration of ownership.

Several other holders of debt-acquired farms sold many properties via the contract sale method, accepting as little as 5 to 10 per cent of the purchase price in cash. In contrast, Equitable sold less than 50 farms by this method because it felt that a sufficient cash down-payment, representing the buyer's equity in the farm, should be required so that the property would stay sold. This reduced the number of possible buyers and tended to lower the price obtainable, but the fact that almost no reacquisitions and resales were necessary, and no trouble was experienced on purchase money mortgages seems to be ample justification for this policy decision.

Equitable sold some farms every year it owned them. The last one acquired during the depression was disposed of in 1947. By far the largest number was sold in the four years from 1941 to 1944, however, when 5,150 farms were returned to individual ownership. They were war years when the demand for farm land and its price had substantially increased from depression lows. As a result of the rehabilitation program just described, Equitable farms were ready to participate in the all-out production effort of the war period. They sold accordingly.

Who bought the farms? A tabulation of 7,294 sales revealed that about 40 per cent were to tenants, either on Equitable or other farms. Many of them undoubtedly were former owners of foreclosed farms. Another 26 per cent of the sales were to adjoining landowners and other well-to-do farmers. A like percentage of the buyers were classified as investors, largely local merchants and professional men.

Former owners repurchasing their old farms represented a small proportion of the buyers. Only two per cent were so classified. While one likes to think of returning the family homestead to its former owner and thereby healing some of the foreclosure wounds, it didn't work out that way. Many who accumulated sufficient funds as tenant operators preferred to buy other farms. Others discontinued farming because of age and other reasons.

On what terms were Equitable properties sold? Of all sales made, approximately 77 per cent were on a credit basis and 23 per cent for all cash. Cash received on the credit sales averaged about 30 per cent of the purchase price. Credit sales resulted in new purchase money mortgage investments for the Equitable and therefore the percentage of cash received was an important consideration.

That brings us to the question—how did the Equitable Life Assurance Society make out financially on this entire farm acquisition-management-sale episode?

The total consideration received from sale of all Equitable-owned farms was $101.6 million. Gross operating revenue during ownership aggregated about $38.8 million, making total receipts of $140.4 million.

The entire original mortgage investment was fully recovered as were all capitalized charges. In addition, defaulted interest which had previously been charged off was recovered. The combined sales and operating revenue was also sufficient to reimburse the Equitable for all its farm operating expense, its repair and painting costs, all real estate taxes and finally, the administrative overhead during the entire management period.

After restoring the original investment and

paying its way, operation and sales provided a margin of return which represented an annual net earnings rate of about 1.8 per cent on the average investment outstanding during the ownership period. This is in rather sharp contrast with the widespread loss, not only of earnings but also of original capital, which many institutional and individual lenders suffered during the same period.

I leave it to professional historians to determine whether responses made by the Equitable Society to the problems generated by the acquisition, management, and sale of over 8,700 farms were "creative," or merely "adaptive," to use Professor Schumpeter's terms. Certainly, a number of the techniques used were uniquely suited to the task. We hope no farm lender will ever be called upon again to endure such an experience. But if it should come to pass, some guide posts are now available.

In conclusion, we might ask whether the errors of the past are being avoided in current farm lending activities. The deficiencies of the old correspondent system of making farm loans have been recognized and corrected. Short-term straight real estate mortgages have practically been replaced by long-term amortized mortgages. Equitable's current farm mortgage investment of $320 million is almost entirely on a long-term amortized basis. Furthermore, loan features reducing farmers' credit costs and enabling them to protect themselves against many financial contingencies have been developed. Equitable Society's own Farm Income Privilege and Prepayment Reserve Plan are examples that might be mentioned. Finally, there have been definite improvements in appraisal technique and in the analysis of debt-carrying capacity.

These are steps in the right direction. Yet, the competitive bidding in recent years for farm mortgages and the apparently unbounded optimism of many farm borrowers and some farm lenders regarding future ability to repay heavy debts makes one wonder why they do not read history more carefully and heed the lessons it can teach.

THE COMING OF RURAL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS TO THE OHIO VALLEY, 1892-1912*

CLAYTON S. ELLSWORTH

College of Wooster

The history of popular education before the Civil War centered around the struggle of democratic-minded pioneers to build a one-room school at every crossroads. Since then the march of democracy has demanded, in direct contradiction, the abolition of the cherished small school, and its replacement by the more up-to-date consolidated school. Crusaders for the consolidated school have believed that children in the country were entitled to the same educational opportunities that were being made increasingly available to city children. This paper discusses three phases of the consolidation story: First, the reasons for the decline in prestige of the one-room school; second, the launching of the movement for educational parity for farm children by nationally known leaders; and third, two case histories showing how the unsung citizens of two farming communities realized educational equality by establishing the first consolidated school west of the mountains at Kingsville, Ohio, and the first consolidated school in Kentucky at May's Lick.

The one-room schools in the Ohio Valley as late as the first decade of this century illustrate the deficiencies of the little red school. The quality of teaching was inferior. Meager revenues from myriads of small tax districts with declining enrollments due to population shifts made low salaries inevitable. In Ohio, where the number of one-teacher schools was exceeded only by those of Illinois, 4,000 of the 10,071 schools had 15 or less pupils in them. Moreover, 750 of these schools had an average of about one pupil to each grade.[1] The

* This paper was presented at a joint session of the Agricultural History Society with the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in Pittsburgh, April 19, 1956.

[1] A. C. Monahan, *The Status of Rural Education in the United States*, Bureau of Education, *Bulletin* 1913, no. 8 (Washington, 1913), 21-26. This study was based on 32 states as revealed by the 1910 census and by special reports submitted, upon request

low teacher salaries, which ranged from $39.25 a month in Tennessee to $52.00 in Indiana, attracted inexperienced, uneducated women who could not qualify for better paid positions in the town and city schools.[2] Actually, as the Superintendent of Schools in Winnebago County, Illinois, pointed out, very few of the country school teachers within his jurisdiction received as much compensation as the lowest paid janitor in the city of Rockford in the same county.[3] Perhaps they did not deserve as much for only 32 per cent of the country school teachers in that state had ever studied in a high school for as long as a term.[4] This was about the situation everywhere in the United States in that decade.

Low salaries were not the only forbidding aspects of country school teaching that repelled the ablest teachers. Unsatisfactory boarding places, the difficulty of remaining aloof from neighborhood quarrels, and janitorial duties irked many teachers. And, of course, the country school teacher had no principal to whom she might send rowdies for a much deserved whacking. Low salaries, poor working conditions, as well as proposals of marriage, which were often promptly offered any reasonably attractive teacher, produced a frequent turnover of teachers. However, no county in the Ohio Valley suffered as much as one county in Michigan a bit earlier where the average length of the school year of districts was 8.4 months, the average endurance of each teacher but 3.8 months.[5]

A second major indictment of the country school was a curriculum too limited in quality and short in quantity. The one-room schools seldom offered more than the 3 R's, grammar, geography, and history. They lacked the enrichment of the curriculum by modern literature, science, music, painting, and manual training then appearing in the urban school. Country children who recited singly in ungraded schools, it was charged, lacked the stimulus of a competitive recitation by many pupils in the graded city school. And most of the small country schools did not have enough students to organize a band, a baseball, or a basketball team.

The rural school year, in spite of some progress, was still in 1910 about 47 days shorter than the urban year of 184.3 days. In the Ohio Valley, Kentucky provided the shortest year of 110.6 days, Ohio the longest year, one of 155 days.[6] The average daily attendance per 100 rural pupils was correspondingly lower. Bitter cold, heavy rain, poor roads, and illness kept the country child at home. Consequently farm educators made effective use of printed photographs showing farm children either walking to school in zero weather or what was often little better, being transported in open sleds by their parents. The custom of staying out of school to help the parents harvest the crops also contributed to the number of absences. Compulsory attendance legislation, which was becoming universal, was sometimes hard to enforce in country areas on account of hostile public opinion and the absence of attendance officers.

Upon graduation from the one-room school, the country child outside a high school district could not attend high school as readily as his city cousin unless his parents, or the trustees of the subdistrict, had the money to pay his tuition in town. And some way had to be devised to pay the board bill of a country student in bad weather.

A third indictment of the country schools was their bleak, unhealthful physical facilities. The buildings, as typically described by one of the reports of the Presbyterian Church and Country Life Department were "for the most part old and out of date—one room, low ceilings, dingy and dark."[7] The refinements of the interiors of city schools were still absent. Less than one per cent of the one-room schools in the Progressive Era had running water or chemical toilets. They were still heated by unjacketed stoves without foul air

---

of Monahan, from state superintendents of public instruction. A. B. Graham, *Centralized Schools in Ohio*, Bureau of Education, *Bulletin* 1, no. 5 (Columbus, 1906), 24.

[2] Monahan, *Status of Rural Education*, 31; National Education Association, *Proceedings*, 1897, p. 394, indicates that there had been a slight improvement in salaries.

[3] O. J. Kern, *Among Country Schools* (New York, 1906), 229-246; Harold W. Foght, *The American Rural School* (New York, 1910), 92-115.

[4] Monahan, *Status of Rural Education*, 26-39; J. W. Brister, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tennessee, *Rural School Situation in Tennessee* (Nashville, 1912), 47.

[5] National Education Association, *Proceedings*, 1897, p. 426.

[6] Harlan Updegraff and William R. Hood, *A Comparison of Urban and Rural Common-School Statistics*, Bureau of Education, *Bulletin* 1912, no. 21 (Washington, 1912), 29.

[7] Department of Church and Country Life of the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, *A Rural Survey in Illinois* (1912), 13.

extractors.[8] In some of the districts, the children ran home at noon, but a majority of them had to carry cold lunches to school. The hot lunch, which was apparently invented by Miss Elizabeth Farrell, a special teacher of backward children in New York City in 1905, awaited the facilities of the consolidated school.[9]

A fourth indictment of the one-room school was its cost.[10] Its enemies argued repeatedly that the cost of a poor education per pupil to the taxpayers in sparsely settled districts was exorbitant; and that the cost to the parents in time and horseflesh in transporting their children to school in inclement weather was needless.

To secure a better education for rural children and with the hope of decreasing the cost of education, educators urged the adoption of the consolidated school, a many-room school which would replace two or more schools and to which pupils living at a distance were to be transported free.

II

Professional educators led the attack upon the little red school. Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, educational statesmen of New England, and Caleb Mills, the farsighted Superintendent of Public Instruction of Indiana, led off with a barrage of adverse criticism before the Civil War; after the war, members of the newly founded National Education Association seldom adjourned their annual conventions without a heated discussion of the deficiencies of the rural schools. These intermittent diatribes culminated in the publication in 1897 of the earliest study of national scope, "The Report of the Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools." This explosive document, carefully prepared by leading school administrators headed by the farm-born Henry Sabin, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Iowa, consisted of a series of reports of subcommittees.[11] The evaluations of the one-room school were generally unfavorable. Typically, one report went so far as to recommend that since thousands of rural schools furnished their pupils with a "miserable preparation for the duties of life" the smallest ones should be replaced by consolidated schools.[12] This merciless indictment was repeated perennially in studies made by the National Education Association and state departments of education.

Alongside of the public school man on the front line of attack were the learned agricultural research workers and agricultural teachers. A. C. True, Director of the Office of Experiment Stations of the United States Department of Agriculture, quickly saw in the consolidated school a major means of closing the gap between the knowledge of his experts and the application of this knowledge on the farm. Accordingly, at the turn of the century, True prescribed the amputation of districts where the average attendance was less than twenty pupils. This surgery was only the first of many subsequent recommendations made by True and his associates.[13]

With a wealth of experience and talent, Willett Martin Hayes, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture from 1905 to 1913, was a most persuasive champion of the twin correlates of agricultural education and the consolidated school.[14] Hays, who had operated a farm with the help of his older brother, had been educated in the common schools in Iowa, at Drake University and at Iowa State College. Subsequently he had been a teacher of agriculture in two land-grant schools, and had worked on the editorial staffs of two farm papers.[15] As

[8] Fletcher B. Dresslar, *Rural Schoolhouses and Grounds*, Bureau of Education, *Bulletin* 1914, no. 12 (Washington, 1914), 22.

[9] Caroline L. Hunt, *The Daily Meals of School Children*, Bureau of Education, *Bulletin* 1909, no. 3 (Washington, 1909), 6-9.

[10] George W. Knorr, "Consolidated Rural Schools and Organization of a County System," Office of Experiment Stations, *Bulletin* 232 (Washington, October, 1910), 36-50.

[11] The information about Sabin was obtained in the following material which was furnished to me by the Office of the Director, State University of Iowa Libraries: Jacob A. Swisher and Carl H. Erbe, *Iowa History as Told in Biography* (1932), 173-177; L. F. Andrews, "Henry Sabin and His Highly Esteemed Work for Education," in Des Moines *Register and Leader*, March 27, 1910; A. M. Deyoe, "Henry Sabin . . . An Appreciation," in *Midland Schools*, 47:46 (October, 1932).

[12] National Education Association, "Report of the Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools," *Proceedings*, 1897, p. 427.

[13] A. C. True, "Some Problems of the Common Rural School," U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook 1901*, pp. 133-154; Office of Experiment Stations, "The Teaching of Agriculture in the Rural Common Schools," *Circular* 60 (Washington, 1904), 9-10; *Annual Report 1905*, pp. 331-335.

[14] W. M. Hays, "Consolidated Rural Schools," Office of Experiment Stations, *Bulletin* 165 (Washington, 1906), 53-56.

[15] Mr. Wayne D. Rasmussen, U. S. Agricultural Marketing Service, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Agricultural History Society, very generously sent the biographical information about Hays which he typed from the *Experiment Station Record*, 58:

Assistant Secretary, his most ambitious project was a three-year investigation of many of the experimental rural consolidated schools scattered over the nation which he directed with the cooperation of George W. Knorr of the Bureau of Statistics. In 1910, this study concluded that the consolidated school was highly superior to the one-room school, and endorsed by 95 per cent of the farmers who had given it a fair trial.[16] It warned that in establishing the new school careful consideration should be given to the wealth, size, and topography of the school district, and that the new school might be more expensive than the one-room school. Accurate, thorough, and temperate, the report was the best publication on the subject at the time.

The Office of Public Roads, then in the Department of Agriculture, overlooked no opportunity to publicize the inseparable connection between good roads and good schools. Characteristically, it printed a speech made by R. H. Jesse, President of the University of Missouri, at a National Good Roads Convention held at St. Louis in 1903 at which both William J. Bryan and T. R. Roosevelt also spoke. Jesse avowed that he would stump the state in behalf of consolidated schools were it not for the fact that school wagons "could not get 200 yards in most of our counties."[17]

The next year another source of leadership appeared when Eugene Davenport, Dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois, published a bulletin in which he affirmed that transportation to a consolidated school was feasible if the horses were hitched double and attached to suitable vehicles.[18] In the succeeding year, Albert B. Graham, now better known for his pioneer work in establishing 4-H clubs at Springfield, Ohio, was appointed Superintendent of the Extension Service at the College of Agriculture, Ohio State University. Since the Department of Education lacked funds to promote consolidated schools as vigorously as Graham thought desirable, he used his position year after year to hasten the coming of these schools.[19]

Farm papers like *Wallaces' Farmer*, and farm organizations, notably the National Grange and some of the state granges like the Ohio Grange, endorsed the new school.[20] Ministerial support came principally from the Department of Church and Country Life of the Presbyterian Church in the United States after it had made an intensive study of the farm and town schools in the Ohio Valley, Arkansas, and Oregon.[21]

III

Consolidated schools were first started in the older urban areas of the Northeast where Mann and Barnard had early protested against one-room schools, and where movements of population to new factory and railroad sites confronted some towns with the task of financing many schools left with very small enrollments. In 1869, Massachusetts passed an act permitting both the consolidation of schools and the expenditure of public funds for transportation of pupils to these schools. Although consolidated schools were put into operation in the next decade at Concord, Montague, and Quincy, their rapid spread did not begin until the 1890's when taxpayers really unloosened their purse strings to inaugurate an era of horse-and-wagon school days.[22]

701-709 (June, 1928), and from Andrew Boss, "Willett Martin Hays, 1859-1928," *Journal of Heredity*, 20:496-509 (November, 1929).

[16] Knorr, "Consolidated Rural Schools," 2, 36-50, 97.

[17] R. H. Jesse, "The Relation of Roads to Schools," *Proceedings of National Good Roads Convention Held at St. Louis, Mo., April 27-29, 1903*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Public Road Inquiries, *Bulletin* 26 (Washington, 1903), 34.

[18] Eugene Davenport, *Consolidation of Country Schools*, University of Illinois, *Bulletin* 2, no. 3 (December 1, 1904). In Library of Congress.

[19] Graham's *Centralized Schools in Ohio* was sent annually to a regular mailing list of "6000 or more and to a special list of township clerks and to members of the legislature." A. B. Graham, 159 Clinton Heights Avenue, Columbus 2, Ohio, to author, February 26, 1953. By 1910, the mailing list had grown to 33,000.

[20] National Grange, *Proceedings*, 1902, p. 245; 1905, p. 115; Ohio State Grange, *Proceedings*, 1895, p. 54; 1904, p. 40 for typical moderate approvals of the consolidated school "wherever practicable."

[21] The surveys directed by Warren H. Wilson embraced Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Northwestern Ohio, Southwestern Ohio, Green and Clermont counties in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. *A Rural Survey in Tennessee* (1912), 30 and following contained the only mention that the author found anywhere of overcrowding in the one-room school.

[22] William L. Eaton, *An Account of the Movement in Massachusetts to Close the Rural Schools, and to Transport Their Pupils, at Public Expense, to the Village Schools* (Boston, 1893). This account, written by the Superintendent of Schools at Concord, was a part of the Massachusetts educational exhibit at the Columbian Exposition and was lent to the author by the Massachusetts State Library. George H. Martin, "Conveyance of Children to School in Massachusetts," *Educational Review*, 7:

In Massachusetts, the consolidation of subdistricts of an area usually progressed in such a piecemeal manner that at Concord, for example, over ten years were required to complete the process. West of the mountains, the community of farm owners of Kingsville township, located in Ashtabula county in the Western Reserve, where the educational ideals were as lofty as the clay roads were bad, smashed all records when it virtually consolidated most of a township between 1892 and 1894. This was probably the first consolidation in Transappalachia.[23]

In Kingsville township, where the entire township population declined from 1,712 to 1,412 during the 1890's, one weak subdistrict needed a new school building.[24] At this point a small group of men, including some of the members of the school board, sitting around a potbellied stove in the hardware store of community-minded Jacob Kinnear, decided that it would be cheaper and wiser to transport the children to a school already built in town than to erect a new school house in the county. They presented their plan to the trustees of the township school board who, without the formal approval of the voters, instructed the new principal F. E. Morrison to arrange for the transportation. Undeterred by the mild opposition which came mainly from the teachers and their friends who feared that the teachers would be "knocked out of a job" in the future, the principal hired six drivers.

Action was halted temporarily when it was discovered that although the board could act for the entire township in most school matters, it had no authority to provide transportation without the sanction of state law. In 1894, the legislature passed a special law authorizing any township possessing the same population as Kingsville to provide transportation. Not until ten years later did the legislature authorize the school boards of any township, regardless of population, to act similarly upon the approval of a majority of the voters.

Community leaders asserted that the new arrangement was more efficient and less expensive than the old. Their egos were inflated by the distinguished visitors who came to see the new plan and to overtax both the public lodging facilities of the village and the patience of the wives of the school board members who had to provide them with meals and rooms. Conspicuous among the visitors in 1900 was a committee of three from Illinois: O. J. Kern, Superintendent of Schools of Winnebago County, a doubting Thomas from the same county, and the state superintendent of schools. One result of this much publicized trip was the establishment three years later of the first consolidated school in Illinois at Seward.[25]

The success of the Kingsville, Ohio, experiment accelerated consolidated schools in some communities. Their rapid adoption was blocked elsewhere by stubborn opponents armed with innumerable arguments. Sentimental voters were reluctant to destroy a landmark and a social center of the neighborhood where spelling and literary contests, box suppers and parties of all kinds had been held, where political speeches had been given, and votes cast in political elections. The potency of this nostalgic view overcame as influential

147-153 (February, 1894); G. T. Fletcher, "Consolidation of Schools and Conveyance of Children," U. S. Commissioner of Education, *Report 1900-1901*, 1:175-184; Townsend Scudder, *Concord: American Town* (Boston, 1947), 279, 286-288.

[23] George S. May, "Iowa's Consolidated Schools," *The Palimpsest*, 37:11 (January, 1956), says that Indiana was the first state in the Midwest to follow the example of Massachusetts when it authorized in 1889 the transportation of students at public expense. Indiana did not, however, establish a consolidated school to which children were transported until 1899. Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Sixth Biennial Report*, 1911-1912, pp. 105-117.

[24] As early as 1867, the Ohio State Commissioner of Common Schools, *Fourteenth Annual Report*, 1868, p. 45, had urged the abolition of subdistrict schools. Unfortunately, the school records of centralization were burned in 1928. J. P. Treat, a teacher from neighboring Geneva, Ohio, gave a contemporary account, "Solution of the Country School Problem," *Ohio Educational Monthly*, 45:8-12 (January, 1896); and F. E. Morrison, *Centralization of Schools, Its Needs and Advantages* (1897), 5-19, told his story in simple detail. Excerpts from Morrison's account were printed in the "Report of the Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools," National Education Society, *Proceedings*, 1897, pp. 512, 513. The catalogs of the high school, 1892-1893, 1895-1896, and *Kingsville Centennial Celebration* (1905), 16-21, supply corroborative detail.

[25] O. J. Kern, *Report of a Visit to the Centralized Schools of Ohio, October 1900* (Rockford, Illinois, n.d.), 6-11; Kern, *Among Country Schools*, 240-256. F. H. Hall of Illinois, a speaker at an annual meeting of the American Association of Farmers' Institute Workers in Washington, D. C., November 1905, mentions the skepticism of one member of the Kern expedition. Office of Experiment Stations, *Bulletin* 165 (Washington, 1906), 56. Although three districts were united, transportation of pupils to the Seward four-room school was not undertaken during this period. Alice Hill Mackey, "History of the Consolidation of Kingsville School," 1-3, a manuscript written in 1953 and lent to the author by Miss Alice Phillips, recalls the stream of visitors.

an agricultural leader as Liberty Hyde Bailey. Bailey was, of course, the chairman of the famed *Report of the Commission on Country Life* which pointed to the need of "a redirected education" but omitted any specific endorsement of the consolidated school. In a special article, "A Danger in Rural School Consolidation," published in *School and Society*, Bailey admitted later that although sometimes consolidated schools were necessary, he was opposed to any general law favoring them unless some provision was made for the retention of the one-room school house as a community hall.[26] Moreover, men and women who were trustees of the small school boards were loath to relinquish the power and prestige entitled to them by their position. Some teachers feared that they might lose their positions.

Some farm voters argued prophetically that eventually the new school would mean higher taxes; others objected to the so-called frills of consolidated schools. Still others predicted that real estate in the district of an abandoned school would depreciate in value. Tradesmen in hamlets and small towns who adhered to the adage, "trade follows the school," evaluated the consolidated school in terms of whether the proposed school would help or harm their business.

Free transportation, an indispensable part of the consolidated schools, became the principal target of the opponents. Disciples of rugged individualism, who were often talkative, retired farmers seated comfortably on a bench in front of a country store, envisaged transportation as an indication of the degeneration of youth, and moanfully contended that government had no more legal obligation to assume the role of the schoolchild's coachman than it had to become the provider of his food and clothing.[27] The objections to transportation that some of the mothers had made in consolidated school districts were emphasized.[28] These mothers reported that the average one-hour trip to school in pleasant weather was healthful. The longer than average ride in heavy rain and deep snow was uncomfortable and at times hazardous despite the fact that the wagons were equipped with side curtains, heaters, and blankets. And come good weather, come bad weather, some mothers vociferously objected to the rides on account of the improper conversation and conduct that they alleged frequently took place on crowded wagons.

How stubborn the opposition could be is illustrated in an attempt to prevent the birth of the first consolidated school in Kentucky. This near tragedy took place at May's Lick, a small town of 308 people—42 less than there had been 30 years earlier—situated in a tobacco and stock farming area about 10 miles from Maysville, the county seat of Mason County. The farms were largely free from mortgage debts. The 37.2 per cent of the farmers who were tenants were almost entirely white and share tenants.[29] Fifty-six per cent of the children in the May's Lick school district lived in tenant homes. Since the historic Maysville-Lexington Pike traversed the county and May's Lick, the roads were somewhat better than in most counties of the Ohio Valley.

After Kentucky had passed a law in 1908 requiring each county to establish within two years at least one county high school with free tuition for rural children, Mason County quickly responded.[30] A county board of edu-

[26] *School and Society*, 1:315-316 (February, 1915).

[27] This argument was upheld in the Illinois courts in the case of *Mills v. School Directors of Consolidated District No. 532, Illinois Appeals*, 154:119.

[28] Edgar B. Mitchell, "The American Farm Woman as She Sees Herself," U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook 1914*, pp. 315-316, gives a good sample of the objections of many mothers.

[29] U. S. Census Office, 13th Census, 1910, vol. 6, *Agriculture*, 642. In Kentucky 33.9 per cent of the farmers were tenants, in Illinois 41.4, in Indiana 30.0, in Ohio 28.4, in Tennessee 41.4, and in West Virginia 20.5.

[30] Manuscript "Minutes" of the Mason County Board of Education in the archives of Mason county superintendent of schools, September 5, 1908 to January 1, 1913, especially those of December 3, 1910, June 10, July 15, October 5, 1911. These brief sources were supplemented by communications from members of school boards involved in the controversy, news stories, and communications from county correspondents which were printed in the two county newspapers, the Maysville *Public Ledger* and Maysville *Bulletin* 1908-1912. The most pertinent items were printed in the *Bulletin* May 12, 1908, April 1, 1909, October 20, 1910, February 16, May 4, September 14, December 14, 1911, January 11, February 8, February 15, August 29, 1912; in the *Public Ledger* September 3, 5, 10, January 3, February 11, 1911, February 3, 1912.

The *Biennial Report 1909*, p. 205, of the Kentucky Superintendent of Public Instruction, contains a report from Charles Dixon Wells, superintendent of Mason county until his retirement in 1910, in which Wells refers to a new school building in progress at May's Lick and to the need for public transportation of the children to the new school. Martha Elizabeth Wells, "Biography of Charles Dixon Wells" (manuscript, Jacksonville, Florida, May 1950, 8 pages) which was shown the author by Mr. James L. Pyles, describes the role of Wells in first pushing the idea that May's Lick

cation, created from each of the subdistricts of the county as specified by the new law, met to choose a site somewhere in the county. But the meeting adjourned abruptly when it was discovered that each member of the board, anxious to have a school in his district that would be supported in part by a county education tax, thought that the ideal spot was in his district.

William E. Pyles, May's Lick's representative on the board, proved to be both a practical and unbowed champion of his community. He proudly farmed a 235-acre tract on which he had been born "up in a holler" about two miles from town. After attending Kentucky Wesleyan College for a brief period, he clerked in a store before he settled down on the home farm. Besides breeding purebred Barred Rock chickens, he had displayed a strong sense of community responsibility by successfully agitating to bring a rural telephone company and rural free delivery to Mason County.

After the first futile adjournment of the county board, he persuaded 50 citizens of May's Lick to sign a statement that they would vote a tax of $5,000 annually for five years for a school to be built in May's Lick. Should the district not raise the full amount by taxation, these citizens guaranteed to reach into their overall pockets for the balance. Impressed by this display of local financial initiative, and by the large number of pupils who lived in the May's Lick area, the county board finally voted unanimously to authorize the location of a school there.

Seemingly the citizens of May's Lick were to have a new school. But just as the building contracts were about to be signed, the board of education suddenly announced that it had been forced to abandon its sanction of the May's Lick school on the legal grounds that the cost of the school could not be paid with one year's revenue from the May's Lick district. If the May's Lick citizens wanted a school, the board advised either of two alternatives: All of the money would have to be raised by one tax levy—an impossible alternative—or else an orthodox sinking fund would have to be built up gradually over a period of years by taxation until it was sufficient to pay for a school. The new school remained only a dream; and the May's Lick students were housed in makeshift quarters.

In desperation, Pyles invented the May's Lick Improvement Company, a holding company, as a third method of financing the school. Thirty thousand dollars, the estimated cost of the building, would be secured by the sale of 250 shares at $100 each, and added to the $5,000 in annual taxes originally offered by the taxpayers. Each year the county school board would pay May's Lick's portion of the county school fund as a "rental" to the Improvement Company. When $25,000, including six per cent interest had been paid in rent, the county would receive the deed to the school.

Pyles was aided and abetted in this ingenious scheme by the county superintendent of schools, the county attorney, the county judge in Maysville, and by a Baptist minister in May's Lick.[31] The counsel of these people was as encouraging as the sale of stock in the Improvement Company was discouraging. After Pyles had sold only one fifth of the stock, he admitted his defeat to the president and cashier of the First National Bank in Maysville. The official made a lifesaving loan of $20,000 to the Improvement Company. Thereupon, the

should build a school building large enough to accommodate children from the then contiguous districts which could become a part of the May's Lick district. In an interview which the author had with William E. Pyles at Pyles' home on Route 68, Maysville, March 24, 25, 1953, Pyles gave generous credit to Wells.

The *Biennial Report 1911*, pp. 225, 232, contained a story by J. T. Coates, Supervisor of Rural Schools in Kentucky, about "the first real consolidated school with regular transportation of students at public expense" at May's Lick. His report printed a picture of Pyles, who with Miss Jessie O. Yancey, the County Superintendent of Schools, "deserve the greatest honor in this pioneer movement."

The *Biennial Report 1913* describes Kentucky laws on consolidation and transportation, and gives factual information on the operation of the May's Lick school, 117, 367-403. See also *The Common School Laws of the State of Kentucky* (Frankfort, 1914), sections 117-129, 138-140. The *Biennial Report 1913*, pp. 376-378, also printed a letter written by Pyles on February 25, 1913 and addressed to the state superintendent of public instruction, which gave a summary of the history of the school's controversy. This letter, with descriptions of the school by McHenry Rhodes, State University of Kentucky, and R. F. Gaither, the first principal, was given a wider audience by A. C. Monahan, *Consolidation of Rural Schools and Transportation of Pupils at Public Expense*, Bureau of Education, *Bulletin* 1914, no. 30 (Washington, 1914), 70-78.

[31] The names of the other local citizens who worked to establish the school besides Wells, Pyles, and Yancey were the Reverend L. N. Thompson, May's Lick, County Judge C. D. Newell, County Attorney Tom Slattery, and Charles D. Pearce, Cashier, First National Bank, Maysville. Stanley Reed, the representative from Mason county, voted for the 1912 bill although the bill was introduced by the representative of another county, Pendleton.

county board authorized the construction of the new school, and local masons began to dress Kentucky limestone for the foundations.

When the building was completed in September 1910, it was large enough to accommodate both a grade and high school, with several class rooms standing empty. It had such up-to-date features as acetylene gas lighting, running water, an auditorium, and a laboratory. One day had been set aside as a working day to which men and boys were invited to come with equipment to establish a school lawn and to enjoy a dinner served by the mothers and girls in the school building. To raise money for such extras as window shades, sanitary drinking fountains, a piano, and library books, the parents, at the suggestion of one of the teachers, supplied the food for a community Thanksgiving dinner for which a charge was made. After the dishes had been washed, a play was given, followed by games and talk. By this time darkness had descended upon the grey Kentucky downs, and the men folk were hungry. And so the leftovers, augmented by oysters drowned in rich milk, were served at one half the price of the noon meal. After three such community Thanksgiving days had netted over $800, the community decided to make them permanent. This Thanksgiving custom is still observed and the funds still go to the school.

Community harmony was soon to be broken by a most violent struggle. It arose out of the two-pronged question of whether contiguous districts should be consolidated into the May's Lick district and whether the children from these areas as well as those in May's Lick district should be transported to school. Some such plan had been in the minds of the school fathers when they built an oversize building, but with a foreknowledge of the opposition that the controversy over transportation would evoke, they had remained discreetly silent until the new school was built.

An Act of God opened a wedge. In the summer of 1910, after a flood had washed away a small school house in an adjoining district of Arthuranna, the county superintendent of schools and Pyles persuaded the taxpayers not to rebuild but to become a part of the May's Lick district, and to permit the transportation of their children to school. Transportation of seven children from Arthuranna to May's Lick in a school wagon that fall was such a success that the county board authorized similar action by other contiguous districts provided that a majority of the taxpayers consented in writing. Before a vote was taken in August 1911, educational rallies were held at which prominent educators like the Kentucky Rural Supervisor of Schools spoke; and the leading county newspaper, Maysville *Bulletin*, published favorable excerpts from the results of the study of consolidated schools which had just been completed by the United States Department of Agriculture under Hay's direction. In the meantime, opponents of consolidation and transportation led by a well-to-do neighbor and friends of Pyles, conducted a house-to-house campaign stressing the argument that the taxpayers could not afford to bear the cost of a 20 cent levy upon each $100 worth of property, for "local school purposes including transportation of children to and from school." When the vote was counted, it was found that 134 taxpayers favored the tax, and 90 were opposed.

The sheriff then collected the tax. On the strength of this, the county school board had already ordered on credit from the Delphi Wagon Company, Delphi, Indiana, seven new school wagons at $165 apiece to transport the children to school, and had contracted to pay each driver a salary of $40 a month. But just as the school bells were about to ring, 20 wealthy taxpayers enjoined the sheriff from delivering the tax money to the board. A circuit court dismissed the injunction, but the case was appealed to the State Appeal Court at Frankfort. Meanwhile, with the assurance that they would be paid some time, the drivers continued their daily rounds.

The opponents of the tax secured the legal assistance of Worthington and Cochran, one of the most famous law firms in Kentucky, while the friends of the new school enlisted the services of five prominent lawyers including Judge Henry S. Barker, President of the University of Kentucky, and Judge Ed C. O'Rear of Frankfort. In January 1912, the final blow came when the court, with only one dissenting voice, ruled that the expenditures for transportation were illegal since they were neither for school supplies nor for the extension of the school term. Expenditures for transportation could be legally made only if the state legislature passed a law authorizing them.[32] The assumption of the Kentucky court

[32] *Shanklin v. Boyd, Kentucky,* 146:460; *Southwestern Reporter,* 142:1041. The major opponents of the new school were Albert Shanklin, a wealthy farm neighbor who had no young children, and William Robb, a warehouseman at May's Lick.

that a state legislature could legalize transportation, if it so wished, was in accordance with the principle that a state legislature has a duty under its constitution to maintain a common and uniform system of education within the state. The legality of transportation is still based upon this doctrine.

The bad news reached May's Lick on a Thursday. The next day the principal of the school told the children what had happened. As he made his announcement one child spoke out, "This means the end of my education," while many others began to cry. Before the principal had finished, he could not hold back his own tears. On the next day, February 3, the Maysville *Public Ledger* published the principal's announcement and warned that unless the legislature passed a favorable law, "The plan is down and out in old Kentucky." At a mass meeting of the parents in May's Lick, the parents volunteered to furnish the money to keep the wagons rolling until the legislature should take action.

Fortunately the legislature was in session, and Pyles and the county superintendent of schools made a hurried trip to Frankfort to make an appeal to the Committee on Education for a bill which would empower county boards of education to fix the boundaries of a consolidated school district and to levy a tax with the consent of the taxpayers to establish, operate, and transport pupils to a consolidated school. Upon assurance that a bill would pass, they returned home, only to learn shortly that serious opposition had arisen to introduction of the bill. When Pyles boarded the train for a second trip, he found the source of the opposition. Three of his neighbors were on the same train. The men exchanged cigars and chatted jovially until they reached Frankfort. Although Pyles could not persuade the representative from his county to introduce the bill, one from another county did so, and the now historic bill passed both houses of the legislature by a comfortable margin. Before school took up again in the fall, the taxpayers of May's Lick voted again on the question of a 20 cent transportation tax. The verdict of 105 for and 20 against ended a four-year struggle.

When the school had first opened two years previously, it had so many unused rooms that the principal and his wife lived in some of them, and the future of the school seemed so dubious that its opponents prophesied that it would soon be used as a tobacco shed. Successful transportation upset this prediction. By 1919, the number of teachers had increased to the point where it became necessary to build a "teacherage." Ten years later, crowded conditions forced the construction of a large addition for class rooms and a gymnasium. And still later a modern cannery building was constructed for use by the domestic science classes and other community groups. Wm. E. Pyles lived to see these improvements, and the unveiling of a bronze plaque, embedded in limestone from his farm, erected in commemoration of the beginnings of the school and the labors of the men who made it.[33]

Meanwhile, during the Kentucky fight for consolidation, other states in the Ohio Valley had won important victories. By 1912, Illinois had started about 40 schools, West Virginia 67, Tennessee 110, Ohio 192, and Indiana 589.[34] Consolidations in Ohio and Indiana were exceeded by only one state, Massachusetts. The impressive record of Indiana was made possible, in part, by the organization of her schools on the township basis whereby all the schools were governed by only one board. In contrast, Illinois, with many economic characteristics similar to Indiana, was handicapped in part, by a school system organized upon subdistricts whereby each township was governed by many school boards who could erect a terrific barrier in the path of a consolidated school.[35] Ohio laws did not empower

Pyles had one child who graduated from the new school.

The first court decision favorable to transportation to school with legislative authorization and at the discretion of the directors of a school was in Vermont in 1894 in *Carey v. Thompson, Vermont*, 66:665; *Atlantic Reporter*, 30:5. See also Newton Edwards, *The Courts and the Public Schools* (Chicago, 1933), 8, 10, 34-69, 520-525.

[33] The sentence on the inscription, "First Consolidated School with Transportation in Kentucky and South of the Ohio River," is true only of Kentucky for schools were established in Louisiana and Tennessee earlier.

[34] The figures for West Virginia are taken from Lyda Judson Hanifan, *Facts and Fallacies about Consolidation of Schools in West Virginia* (West Virginia Department of Free Schools, 1913), 15. The figures for the other states were taken from Monahan, *The Consolidation of Rural Schools*, 13, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25.

[35] The tenacity of the one-room school and its supporters is well illustrated by Leon H. Weaver, *School Consolidation and State Aid in Illinois* (1944), 30. How far the struggle for consolidated schools can be interpreted as an economic struggle between landlords and tenants, the writer of this paper is not prepared to say. Surely, the opposition of some landlords to consolidated schools was only one factor. Tenancy was high in Mason county, and low in Ashtabula county. By 1912, least

all township boards to consolidate subdistricts until 1904. Consolidation progressed more smoothly in Tennessee after county school boards were empowered in 1907 to control all schools within the counties. In fact, Tennessee, which set aside 10 per cent of the general school fund to aid consolidation, was the only state examined in this paper to offer a financial incentive to consolidation. The mountains of West Virginia slowed the progress of consolidated schools in that state.

To be sure, objective factors such as centralized school government, declining population, favorable topography, and good roads facilitated the expansion of consolidated schools in the horse-and-wagon days. When consolidated schools appeared in advance of these facilitating factors, they were the product of human forces—flaming leadership and the deep-seated conviction of the superiority of the education offered by the consolidated school.

progress in establishing consolidated schools had been made in Illinois, a state with the highest tenancy of 41.4 per cent tenants, and in West Virginia with the lowest tenancy of 20.5 per cent tenants. Three of the four counties in Illinois that had established consolidated schools by 1912 were rich or medium rich counties with much tenancy: Douglas county had 48.9 per cent, Edgar County 43.9 per cent, and Winnebago county 39.6 per cent tenants. The fourth, Johnson county, was the only poor county in lower Illinois, and the only county of the four that had a low percentage of tenants, 23.1. U. S. Census Office, 13th Census, 1910, vol. 6, *Agriculture*, 438-440, 445.

The extinction of the one-room school must have seemed a slow process to its enemies in 1912. Time was more nearly on their side than they perhaps realized. Before the clouds of World War I had lifted, the federal government had passed a good roads act, and the Firestone Company had published a booklet, *Consolidated Rural Schools and the Motor Truck*, which listed 14 "outstanding advantages of motor over horse transportation to school."[36] Thus the two adversaries who were to deliver the death blows to the one-room school had come with new weapons to join forces with the pioneers of the horse-and-wagon school days. Although a decisive victory was won during the next three decades, hostilities continued on a small scale. At midcentury, 7,126 one-teacher schools still remained in Illinois, 3,462 in Kentucky, 2,528 in West Virginia, 2,095 in Tennessee, 446 in Ohio, and 411 in Indiana.[37] The percentage, however, of all school children in these states who were attending what has become the vanishing American educational institution ranged from 22 per cent in Kentucky to one per cent in Ohio. To this extent, equality of opportunity, democracy's most cherished ideal, has been furthered.

[36] Firestone Truck Bureau, *Consolidated Rural Schools and the Motor Truck* (Firestone Park, 1920), 47. In U. S. Office of Education Library.

[37] Walter H. Gaumnitz and David T. Blose, *The One-Teacher School—Its Midcentury Status*, Office of Education, *Circular* 318 (Washington, 1950), 19, 23.

FARM WAGE BOARDS UNDER THE WAGE STABILIZATION PROGRAM DURING WORLD WAR II[1]

SAMUEL LISS

Formerly with the Farmers Home Administration, USDA

The creation of the Farm Labor Transportation Program by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in August 1942 made it necessary to devise a method of determining publicly prevailing wages in agriculture. State farm wage boards, it was decided, were to perform this task.[2] When it was found that no means existed of determining a prevailing wage for harvesting asparagus in California, one of the state wage boards had recommended the first

[1] This is the third and concluding article on farm wage boards that were associated with agricultural manpower programs conducted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture during World War II. The first appeared in *Agricultural History* in January 1950 under the title of "The Concept and Determination of Prevailing Wages in Agriculture during World War II"; the second, in July 1953, under the title of "Farm Wage Boards under the Cooperative Extension Service during World War II."

[2] See "The Concept and Determination of Prevailing Wages in Agriculture during World War II," *Agricultural History*, 24:4-18 (January 1950).

maximum wage action in agriculture during World War II.[3] This action and the circumstances that led to it stimulated the creation of maximum wage fixing boards that were to operate in the interest of a wartime farm wage stabilization program.

The wartime farm wage stabilization program was based on the Stabilization Act of October 1942, but its immediate authorization was based on the November 30, 1942 Order of the Economic Stabilization Director which gave the Secretary of Agriculture "authority to determine whether any salary or wage payments to agricultural labor are made in contravention of the Act (of October 1942) or any rulings, orders or regulations promulgated thereunder." Since farm wages were largely substandard compared with industrial wages, in the initial stage (November 1942 to April 1943), little or nothing needed to be done by the Secretary of Agriculture. Later, as farm wages increased, some action was called for. Responsibility for launching a systematic program of farm wage stabilization was delegated to the War Food Administrator in April 1943 where it remained until it was retransferred to the Secretary of Agriculture in June 1945. Thus, until 1945 the wage boards under the program were known as WFA Wage Boards, and thereafter as USDA Wage Boards.[4] Twenty-four state wage boards were established.

The Florida Wage Board was established in November 1943, the other 23 in 1944 or 1945.[5] All were in operation through 1946 when the wage stabilization program in agriculture ended. The most active wage boards were those in California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. The accompanying table shows the date on which the wage boards were established and indicates in some measure the extent of their activities under the specific wage-ceiling phase of the agricultural wage stabilization program.

The WFA Wage Boards had state-wide jurisdiction in the farm wage stabilization program. They conducted meetings to inform growers and workers about wage stabilization objectives and procedures, received and investigated requests from producers for regulation of farm wages, recommended maximum rates of pay, reviewed existing ceiling orders, made adjustments in wage ceilings, investigated and handled alleged violations of established wage regulations and wage ceilings, and performed other functions as directed by the Wage Stabilization Division of the War Food Administration Office of Labor.[6] With important exceptions, they were advisory bodies rather than final arbiters in the making of decisions and in effectuating their findings. Public hearings were used as the principal fact-finding device in ascertaining wage ceilings and in judging cases of wage-ceiling violations. Transcripts or minutes of their meetings and public hearings were usually submitted to the War Food Administration.

The boards were composed mostly of government employees drawn from state or federal agencies in the various states, but a majority of the members were required to be federal employees "having no connection with growers' associations and not engaged in production themselves."[7] Members of college staffs were also eligible to serve on the wage boards. The boards ranged in size from five to ten persons, each member having an alternate. The members were appointed by the Director of the WFA Office of Labor on the suggestion of the Director of the State Agricultural Extension Service, and served without compensation except for payment of per diem and trans-

[3] See S. Liss, "Farm Wages—A Study in the Determination of Prevailing Wages in Agriculture," section on "The Asparagus Case in California." (Unpublished study in the files of the National Council on Agricultural Life and Labor, Washington, D. C.)

[4] These USDA Wage Boards are not to be confused with the similarly named agricultural wage boards which were associated with the Agriculture Department's Farm Labor Transportation Program. For purposes of clarity the name "WFA Wage Boards" rather than "USDA Wage Boards" is used in this discussion to describe the bodies that functioned under the farm wage stabilization program.

[5] It is to be noted that the California USDA Wage Board, which had served as a prevailing-wage-finding body under the Farm Labor Transportation Program, participated in the agricultural wage stabilization program in that state until it was replaced by a WFA Wage Board in March 1944.

[6] After the farm wage stabilization program was transferred from the War Food Administration to the U. S. Department of Agriculture in June 1945, the name "Office of Labor" was changed to "Labor Branch," the latter being placed in the Production and Marketing Administration. The "Wage Stabilization Division" retained its name and organizational identity under the newly designated Labor Branch.

[7] Arthur J. Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization in World War II*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, *Monograph* 1 (Washington, 1950), 41.

W.F.A. WAGE BOARDS AND RECORD OF THEIR ACTIVITIES UNDER THE SPECIFIC WAGE-CEILING PROGRAM

State	Date Established	No. of Ceiling Orders Issued and Effective [a]	No. of Counties Covered [b]	Number of Ceiling Adjustment Applications Handled by Wage Boards 1946	Commodities Affected
Arizona	August 29, 1944	4	6	9	Cotton, melons, hay, cantaloupe, lettuce
Arkansas	August 1, 1945	1	21	0	Cotton
California	March 11, 1944	28	42	1,438	Hay, asparagus, fruits and berries, potatoes, lettuce, dairying, cotton, tomatoes, peas, onions, hops, nuts, grains, general farming, flax straw
Colorado	June 16, 1944	1	4	0	Broom corn
Delaware	May 15,1944	1	2	0	Asparagus
Florida	November 6, 1943	2	32	2,517	Citrus fruit
Idaho	April 7, 1944	10	42	242	Peas, potatoes, sugar beets, grains, cherries, apples, prunes
Illinois	June 6, 1944	0	0	0	
Kansas	July 20, 1945	1	7	0	Broom corn
Maine	August 1, 1945	1	2	0	Potatoes
Maryland	May 19, 1944	0	0	0	
Michigan	June 7, 1944	0	0	0	
Minnesota	August 28, 1945	1	5	9	Potatoes
Mississippi	July 24, 1945	1	19	14	Cotton
Missouri	August 10, 1945	0	0	0	
Nebraska	July 16,1945	0	0	0	
New Jersey	May 16, 1944	0	0	0	
North Dakota	August 21, 1945	1	7	5	Potatoes
Ohio	August 14, 1945	1	4	0	Greenhouse vegetables
Oklahoma	August 20, 1945	1	4	0	Broom corn
Oregon	May 1, 1944	17	20	611	Peas, potatoes, fruits and berries, grains, hay, nuts, truck crops, hops, sheepshearing, peas, general farming
South Dakota	July 20, 1945	3	70	0	Grain, potatoes, corn
Texas	September 11, 1944	2	48	0	Cotton
Washington	April 10, 1944	18	20	396	Fruits and berries, hops, wheat, peas, general farm operations

Source: A. J. Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization in World War II*, Agricultural Monograph No. 1, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Tables 3, 4, and 11 and "Specific Wage Ceiling Regulations Issued by Director," Labor Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture (undated mimeographed statement).
[a] Represents maximum number of orders issued and in effect in any one year 1943 through 1946.
[b] Represents maximum number of counties covered in any one year 1943 through 1946.

portation expenses incurred in the course of their wage-board duties.[8]

It was difficult to get qualified persons to serve on the wage boards. Service on a wage board was generally considered a personal or political liability, particularly if the board undertook enforcement activities. Moreover, most board members had full-time jobs. This problem was somewhat eased when either the entire board or some of its members were relieved from enforcement responsibilities and when executive officers were appointed to the wages boards to take over the administrative burdens.[9]

More than one half of the boards (14) had executive officers and other full-time employees. The executive officer was appointed by the

[8] War Food Administration, *Handbook for State WFA Wage Boards* (Washington, January 15, 1945), 2, 17.

[9] Wayne D. Rasmussen, *The Wage Stabilization Program in Operation*, U. S. Department of Agriculture (Washington, July 1947), 9-10 (preliminary draft).

War Food Administration and was considered its direct representative on the wage board. He served as the chief administrative officer of the board, and, as such was a key figure in the wage-board system. In general, "the executive officer was responsible for carrying out the policy and instructions of the wage board in all matters relating to the wage stabilization program, subject to the general policy of the Labor Branch and Wage Stabilization Division" in the national office.[10] In this capacity, he made studies of wage problems in the state, informed grower and labor groups about the program, appointed local and community advisory committees, arranged for public hearings, assisted the chairman of the board in convening the wage board, prepared tentative wage-ceiling orders for the board's consideration, interpreted regulations and board policy, acted for the wage board on applications for specific adjustments of wage ceilings subject to review by the board, conducted investigations regarding compliance with the program, and was responsible for its general publicity.

The agricultural wage stabilization program had two parts: One governed by "General (Wage Ceiling) Regulations," and the other by "Specific Wage Ceiling Regulations." The wage boards became mainly concerned with the latter.[11] "General Regulations" were issued by the War Food Administration on January 17, 1944, and provided standards for approving increases in farm wages above the general wage ceiling of $2,400 per year (up to $5,000 per year) or its monthly, daily, hourly or piecework rate equivalents, thus offering wage relief in individual cases.[12] "Specific Wage-Ceiling Regulations," which were issued by the War Food Administration on January 20, 1944, provided for fixing maximum wage rates for particular crop operations in defined areas and for making adjustments in such ceilings.[13] Wage ceilings authorized a group of employers to raise wages up to the permitted maximum levels without obtaining individual approval and prohibited payments above the fixed maximum except upon approval. Adjustments in established ceiling rates were designed to offer wage relief to individual growers in a given locality producing the same or similar crops.

The wage boards, as a group, played a comparatively minor role under "General Regulations." In fact, only five of the twenty-four wage boards, those of California, Idaho, Oregon, Texas, and Washington, were authorized to make salary and wage adjustments requested by employers under this phase of the program. Such applications in other states were submitted directly to the War Food Administration in Washington, D. C. As a rule, these regulations were not widely applied, indicating that the large majority of farmers were either unaware of or indifferent to the possibility of making wage adjustments under this phase of the program. The indifference largely stemmed from the fact that over-all wage rates were generally far below the general ceiling of $200 a month. Moreover, a very

[10] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 43.

[11] The emphasis placed on the *specific* wage ceiling rather than on the *general* wage-ceiling phase of the program was explained as follows: The general wage-ceiling method of stabilizing farm wages, which involved freezing all farm wages prevailing on a specific date (the method followed in stabilizing industrial wages during the war), "is not suitable for farm wage stabilization because (1) farm employment is not sufficiently standardized and uniform for the wage rates of a given date to be of specific validity," and (2) "farm employment is very scattered and employment contracts are very informal," thus, "at any given time many seasonal tasks are not in operation . . . [and] would lack a stabilization base." Office of Labor, War Food Administration, *Memorandum* 25 (Washington, January 26, 1944).

[12] The major items contained in the "General Regulations" were: (a) farm wages could not be increased to a rate in excess of $200 per month, or the equivalent weekly, hourly, piecework rate or any other comparable basis, without the approval of the War Food Administrator; (b) up to this rate, farm wages could be increased at will without such approval, *provided such wages did not exceed the maximum rates fixed by the War Food Administrator under the specific wage ceiling program;* (c) wage increases above $200 per month, or the equivalent rate, were permitted if the employer paid this higher rate for the same seasonal work under similar conditions during the year prior to December 9, 1943; and (d) prohibited decreases in farm wages below the highest rates paid during the first nine months of 1942 without the approval of the War Food Administrator. See also War Food Administration, "Manual for Use in Considering Applications for Increases in Wages and Salaries of Agricultural Labor," *Memorandum* 5 (Washington, June 8, 1945).

[13] The authority for these regulations was derived from that portion of the November 30, 1942 Order of the Economic Stabilization Director which provided that increases in farm wages up to $2400 per year were not to be interpreted as violations of the Emergency Price Control Act of October 2, 1942, or any order or regulations issued thereunder, *unless and until the War Food Administrator determined and gave public notice that increases in farm wages in certain areas and crops may no longer be made without his approval.*

small proportion of the applications for approval of wage increases under these regulations affected agricultural *field* workers. As of October 1944, after some ten months of operation, about two thirds of the applications affected supervisory or managerial positions in agriculture; slightly more than one fifth involved clerical, automotive operations, and maintenance jobs; and the balance concerned farm field workers.[14] Of some 1,500 applicants that were handled in 1945 in states which had authority to make adjustments, 929 or 62 per cent originated in California, 230 in Washington, 191 in Oregon, 147 in Idaho, and 2 in Texas. That year, the War Food Administration in Washington, D. C. handled only slightly more than 79 applications, and during the three years, 1944-46, over 500.[15]

On the other hand, following the establishment of the first wage ceiling in California in April 1943, growers gradually became aware of the potentialities of the specific wage-ceiling program in stabilizing the farm labor market. After a slow start in 1943 when only five ceiling orders were promulgated—four in California and one in Florida—the number rose to 41 in 1944 and to 87 in 1945. In 1946, the last year of the program, 92 ceiling orders were issued, comprising over 400 separate wage rates and applying to about 50 different crops in about 350 counties of 18 states. These wage ceilings covered almost 400,000 producers and slightly over one million workers employed on farms and in orchards embracing about 30 million acres.[16] By far, the largest number of ceiling orders affected one operation in one crop, and the great majority of these operations involved harvesting.

Maximum farm wage orders were issued by the War Food Administrator in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the wage boards. No wage board had the authority to make a final determination regarding a specific wage ceiling, but as a matter of practice its recommendations were closely followed. Prior to fiscal 1945, wage boards, at the request of growers, arranged for public hearings to ascertain how much sentiment existed for wage ceilings for particular crop operations. Although this sentiment had to be reasonably strong and representative, it was not necessary to determine that 51 per cent of the producers of a given farm commodity favored ceilings before recommending their establishment. However, during fiscal year 1945, all recommendations of wage ceilings submitted to the War Food Administrator by the wage boards had to be accompanied by a certification that a majority of the affected producers of the commodity desired the establishment of maximum wage rates. This new grower-sponsored requirement, provided in the Agricultural Appropriation Act of 1945, impeded extension of ceilings to growers of labor-competing crops who were able to pay relatively high wages and who, therefore, wished to have a free hand in recruiting labor. Accordingly, at the request of the Office of Labor, this provision was liberalized in fiscal year 1946 to permit action on the basis of sentiment expressed by a majority of the producers participating in a referendum or meeting held for the purpose.

Before making its recommendations, a board was required to hold a public hearing at which all interested persons were given full opportunity to testify.[17] It was realized that "acceptance of wage ceiling orders by employers and employees alike . . . depend[ed] in large measure upon whether they [felt] that they were adequately represented and fairly heard at the public hearing."[18] Accordingly, the wage boards were urged to make every effort to have both groups represented. In general, however, comparatively few workers attended and testified at the public hearings, although it was reported that in California "worker participation at hearings increased [in 1944 and 1945]."[19]

Concrete standards for guiding the wage boards in recommending specific wage-ceiling rates were not formulated, but the following factors were to be considered: (a) "historical and current record of tested and going rates for the particular work in the area affected," (b) "extent of wage rate spiraling and labor turnover," (c) "need for retention and recruitment of agricultural labor," (d) "relationship

[14] W. T. Ham, "Wage Stabilization in Agriculture," *Journal of Farm Economics*, 27:110 (February 1945).

[15] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 52-53.

[16] *Ibid.*, 53-56.

[17] The wage boards were also authorized to hold public hearings and take evidence as to appropriate rates to be recommended *before* a majority of producers had requested the intervention of the War Food Administration, but they could not make any recommendations until a majority of producers favored the establishment of wage ceilings.

[18] *Handbook for State WFA Wage Boards*, 4.

[19] W. H. Metzler, *Two Years of Farm Wage Stabilization in California*, U. S. Department of Agriculture (Berkeley, California, February 1946), 33.

between rates for inter-related job classifications," (e) "general rise in cost of living," (f) "substandard level of wages," and (g) "average crop conditions in the area, and related matters."[20] Although it was specified that "one or more" of these enumerated conditions or circumstances had to "be found to exist" in setting wage ceilings, in practice this action was motivated principally by the desire to stabilize the farm labor market by limiting the area of wage bargaining. This, it was believed, would maximize employment in those agricultural regions where upward wage spiraling and labor pirating were causing an inordinate volume of labor turnover and substantial losses in working time. Request for wage ceilings came not only from growers but also from food-packing and food-processing employers who maintained that high farm wages made it difficult to retain workers in plants where wages were controlled by the National War Labor Board.[21]

So urgent was the apparent need for reducing wage competition for farm labor particularly in 1943 and 1944 that other factors in fixing ceiling levels were neglected. In the view of some students of the problem, the specific wage-ceiling program should have served as an instrument for shaping a sounder wage structure in agriculture. Thus, it was observed, "in setting the maximum rates for an agricultural occupation," the wage boards "must take into account (a) competitive operations on other crops, either in the area or in regions near enough to compete for labor, and (b) interrelated operations in the same crop. The aim must be to equalize earnings in such a way as not to place growers of any essential crop at a disadvantage in securing labor" and not to render "any necessary operation . . . unattractive to labor."[22] But, generally, it was the policy to "hold-the-line" and to maintain historical wage differentials. Thus throughout the most crucial years, 1943 and 1944, the specific wage ceilings were fixed mostly at actual market levels, or even below such levels, and, for the most part, at customary piece rate differentials.

For example, a field survey of the farm wage stabilization program in the Pacific states revealed there was "little evidence that sufficient objective study actually has gone into the formulation of most ceiling programs. In a large proportion of all cases, scales recommended by already-organized committees have been accepted and, with little or no change, put into effect as wage ceilings. This is true, despite the obvious improbability of such committees having gone through the laborious business of considering and weighing all the factors which should enter into any ceiling determination."[23] Moreover, in California it was reported, "the wage board . . . followed existing customs [in recommending wage ceilings based on prevailing or historical wage differentials] rather than trying for an equalization of earnings."[24]

In fact, many ceilings were fixed even *below* the general farm-wage maximum of $2,400 per year, though the latter figure evolved from a design to set a general farm wage ceiling so high as virtually to exempt farm labor from the general wage freeze enunciated by the Economic Stabilization Director in October 1942.[25] And even though such "low-rate ceilings" had to be justified by "a demonstration of the existence (or imminence) of excessive wage rate spiraling and labor turnover,"[26] such justification apparently was not difficult to establish. Only in the last year of the program (1946) were ceilings reported as being rarely occasioned by a finding of labor market disturbances caused by excessive wage spiraling.[27] And it was not until about two years after the first specific wage ceiling order was issued that the wage boards were advised that "the hourly ceiling rate for specific operations should not be lower than the hourly rate comparable to the $200 monthly rate" (namely 85 cents) in the General Regulations,[28] "un-

[20] Wage Stabilization Division, Labor Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Memorandum* 1-46.

[21] For a time, at least, the War Labor Board approved wage increases for food processing labor on the basis of historical relationships between in-plant and field labor.

[22] Ham, "Wage Stabilization in Agriculture," 114.

[23] M. R. Hanger and W. H. Metzler, *Farm Wage Stabilization in the Pacific States*, U. S. Department of Agriculture (mimeographed, June 1946), 9.

[24] Metzler, *Two Years of Farm Wage Stabilization in California*, 50.

[25] This is not to say that the Secretary of Agriculture and later the War Food Administrator did not have the authority to exercise controls *below* the general maximum of $2,400 per year (and later above it, up to $5,000 per year). See footnote 12.

[26] Wage Stabilization Division, Labor Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Memorandum* 1-46.

[27] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 14.

[28] The control of piecework rates under the General Regulations presented administrative difficulties because wage limits specified in the regulations were eventually defined only in terms of time rates, that is, $2,400 per year or $200 per month—piece

less it can be clearly demonstrated that the hourly rates for most farm jobs of similar type or difficulty in the area under consideration are at a lower level."[29] Moreover, it was not until June 1946 that formal instructions were issued to the wage boards which permitted ceiling rates to be fixed *above* the general maximum of $200 per month.[30] In the final analysis, however, it appears that farm laborers were not disadvantaged whatever the level of the ceiling established. For "in most cases, wage rates were so high before wage ceilings were established, that even under the ceilings earnings were exceptional."[31]

It appears that the establishment of wage ceilings as a means of checking inflation was definitely a secondary consideration. Moreover, it did little to promote a better balanced relationship between farm wages and wages in nonagricultural employment. "The disparity between agricultural and industrial wage rates for the nation generally was not substantially decreased"[32] and comparatively few requests were made by producers for higher prices of farm products on the grounds of higher farm wages.[33]

Wage boards had the authority to grant adjustments in specific wage ceiling rates from the beginning of this phase of the farm wage stabilization program. As this phase of the program progressed, the boards became occupied largely with such wage adjustments. In 1945, for example, wage boards handled almost 10,000 applications for specific ceiling adjustments of which some 9,800 were finally approved. During 11 months in 1946, approximately 5,200 applications were reported as handled by wage boards in 10 states.[34]

The need for adjustments stemmed from the need for eliminating or reducing rigidities in wage structures created by wage ceilings fixed on specific crop operations in given areas of production. The aim of adjustments was to equalize earnings where conditions of production and employment made for inequality in earnings in work of a similar character at identical piecework rates. The conditions of production and employment which created such inequality in earnings were basically those associated with below-normal yields of fields and orchards or with other circumstances surrounding employment beyond control of employers and workers and which reduced workers' productivity. Under such conditions, an inflexible wage-rate ceiling (assuming it became the prevailing wage) tended to attract labor to growers with the highest yields, the largest acreages, the most accessible and most productive trees, the best equipment, as well as to those employers who could be reached with the minimum of travel and the minimum of expense. The wage adjustment functions of wage boards were considered therefore to be of basic importance in the specific wage-ceiling program, for such adjustments enabled all producers to compete for and to retain labor on a fairly equal basis.

Since rapid and equitable action was needed on requests for adjustments, wherever possible the wage boards appointed local advisory committeemen, who had intimate knowledge of local crops and working conditions, to investigate the merits of such applications and to make appropriate recommendations. In other cases, particularly where perishable crops were involved, such investigations were conducted by rate adjusters employed by the wage boards. In Florida, for example, "the urgency for immediate adjustments after the setting of original ceiling wage rates was such that two men were appointed by the Florida Agricultural Wage Statistics Board for the purpose," and their recommendations were submitted to the state wage board.[35] The recommendations of adjustment committees, of individual rate adjusters, and of other field

rate equivalents not having been promulgated. To hurdle this administrative barrier, an equivalent piecework rate was later defined as one that "would permit an average worker, working at a customary rate of speed for hourly work, to earn the equivalent hourly rate" of $200 per month. The general maximum wage rate of $200 per month was then converted to 85 cents per hour on the basis of a 26-day workmonth and 9-hour workday. This formula was first recommended by the California Wage Board and subsequently adopted by other wage boards before being, more or less, generally accepted. And in the later course of the farm wage stabilization program, this benchmark rate of 85 cents an hour proved more helpful as a frame of reference for fixing specific piece rate ceiling than for controlling piecework rates under the General Regulations.

[29] Memorandum to State WFA Wage Boards, W. R. Buie, Director of Labor, War Food Administration, *Memorandum* 4, April 30, 1945.

[30] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 33.

[31] Ham, "Wage Stabilization in Agriculture," 120.

[32] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 70.

[33] Ham, "Wage Stabilization in Agriculture," 104.

[34] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 65-67 and table 11.

[35] J. C. Folsom, *Wage Ceiling in Florida Citrus Groves, Season of 1943-44*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics (Washington, July 1950), 5.

men were usually adopted by the wage boards.

Although the wage boards were encouraged to appoint both employers and workers, or their representatives, to the three to ten man adjustment committees, in a comparatively few cases did workers or their representatives serve or attend the meetings. In some areas, particularly in California, growers were opposed to having workers' representatives on the adjustment committees for fear that it might lead to labor organization in agriculture.[36] But, in general, this situation was due less to growers' opposition and more to the "difficulty of finding competent worker representatives, to the reluctance of workers to serve on such committees because of a feeling of being at a disadvantage in dealing with growers man to man, to unwillingness of workers to lose working time in order to serve as committeemen and to mere apathy."[37] Consequently, the committees were composed mostly or exclusively of growers. In California, for example, where "workers did put in an appearance . . . so little mutuality existed between growers and workers that they seemed to be unable to function together."[38]

Instances of successful cooperation between growers and workers on the wage-adjustment committees were exceptional but not entirely lacking. Perhaps one of the outstanding examples of such cooperation occurred in the peach harvest in California's Upper Sacramento Valley. In this case, the wage board "called a mass meeting of the peach pickers before the season, explained the wage ceiling order to them, and asked them to choose four representatives to serve with four representatives selected by the growers. The chairman of the county adjustment committee was a neutral party, representing the public. On this committee, workers were as active as grower members. A worker and a grower were usually paired to go out and check over the orchard belonging to a grower who was asking to pay an adjusted rate. The procedure worked smoothly and gave both growers and workers confidence in the administration of the ceiling order."[39]

Enforcement of wage ceilings was mainly in the hands of the wage boards. After consultation with the appropriate government attorneys, wage boards decided whether to hold hearings on violations. The boards sat as hearing bodies or requested services of a hearings examiner, prepared findings of fact and conclusions of law, and recommended the course of action to be taken against violators. After the wage stabilization program was retransferred to the Department of Agriculture, the responsibility for investigating violations was shifted from the wage boards to the Compliance and Investigating Branch of the Production and Marketing Administration. In 1945, a total of 890 alleged violations was reported to state USDA wage boards. Of these, 796 were investigated and the majority were found to be based on unsubstantiated rumors. During the entire period of the program, only 42 cases were docketed for formal hearings before state wage boards or special examiners. Of the 57 respondents involved in these cases, action against 17 was dismissed, no sanctions were imposed on seven additional respondents, and 33 were penalized by certifying to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue to the effect that specified amounts of wages paid out by these respondents could not be considered legitimate deductions for income tax purposes.[40]

It was observed that "probably the most important single factor in securing compliance was the use of local voluntary committeemen to make recommendation on adjustment requests."[41] Others reported that rigid interpretation of ceilings and the placing of barriers against necessary adjustments of local adjustment committees resulted in "the greatest outbreaks of violations," as for example, "in connection with the tomato wage ceiling in 1943 . . . and the cotton wage ceiling in 1943 and 1944" in California.[42] Wage rollbacks, particularly in asparagus and in the milk-shed area in that state, were responsible for "mass violations" as employers were fearful of losing their labor if they reduced wages.[43]

Practically all observers agree that the outstanding achievement of the farm wage stabilization program, particularly the specific ceiling phase, was to reduce the wartime tendency of farm wages to increase inordinately and sporadically. By setting ceilings above which wage competition and bargaining for labor

[36] Metzler, *Two Years of Farm Wage Stabilization in California*, 41.

[37] Ham, "Wage Stabilization in Agriculture," 117.

[38] Metzler, *Two Years of Farm Wage Stabilization in California*, 4.

[39] *Ibid.*, 34.

[40] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization*, 66-67.

[41] *Ibid.*, 66.

[42] Metzler, *Two Years of Farm Wage Stabilization in California*, 38.

[43] *Ibid.*

and for jobs were held in check, wage spiraling, labor pirating, and labor turnover were minimized. From this stabilization of the labor market flowed advantages to producers in the form of savings in labor costs, to workers in terms of steadier employment and greater seasonal earnings, and to the nation at war, increased production and productivity.

But what of the wage-determination process itself, and of the operation of the wage boards in that process? In what terms may those be appraised? It would seem that their value may be assessed in terms of the contributions they made in illuminating the central problems associated with the methods of farm-wage determination, with the construction of wage scales in agriculture, and in revealing again the close affinity between the functioning of farm labor markets and the levels and structures of agricultural wages. Not of least importance, the operations of the WFA wage boards revealed the need for research and analysis of the factors that enter into wage-making in agriculture, particularly those that must be considered in establishing a wage structure capable of distributing the labor supply most efficiently and of promoting employment stability in given areas of production. Much more is needed to be known, for example, about the conditions of production and employment that affect the proper relationship of piece rate for operations in different crops and for operations in the same or closely related crops.

Equivalent hourly earnings under a system of payment by results is, of course, one crucial criterion for a proper relationship. Consequently, information was needed on hourly earnings at given crop operations compensated for on a piece rate basis under varying conditions of production and employment. These were some of the practical problems with which the wage boards had to deal in fixing specific ceilings and in evaluating requests for departures from them—and which, it may be added, any rational system of wage determination in agriculture must face.

Another significant contribution made by the WFA wage boards was to point up the importance for establishing a mechanism for handling necessary departures from wage ceilings. "Experience demonstrated that the flexibility afforded through (wage-ceiling adjustments) procedure brought a condition of equity into the program which was decidedly conducive to better employer-employee understanding."[44] In fact, another observer stated, "only when adequate adjustments [were] made [were] ceilings . . . an unqualified success."[45] The reason for this is plain: A well-functioning and broadly representative wage-adjustment machinery tends to reduce the rigidities of officially approved or officially countenanced wages, thus materially modifying the usual phenomenon of such determinations becoming frozen and, on that account, impairing the ability of all producers in a given labor market to have equal access to the labor supply and denying workers the same opportunities for equal earnings.

More fundamentally, the farm-wage control process underscored once more the need for a systematic and democratic method of determining wages in the agricultural industry if the functioning of farm labor markets is to be improved—both in wartime and in peacetime. To a considerable degree, wartime wage and labor supply problems in agriculture have their roots in peacetime. WFA wage boards were criticized on the grounds that their members and their administrative staffs were "public officials whose experience and background have been that of rendering efficient service to growers . . . [and who] had little or no background in promoting the interests of agricultural workers."[46] Yet, it was noted, "the mere fact that workers on many of the semi-industrialized types of farms could shift towards a reasonable attitude of working with employer representatives on *wage-adjustment* committees argues strongly for this program as a device for improving employer-employee relations in the agricultural field."[47] It would be hard to argue that in principle, at least, the same beneficial results could not be achieved in joint determination of farm wages at the initial stage.

Today, farm employers in the major wage-labor employing areas have the organization, but lack the will to determine wage scales jointly with labor; farm workers have the will for joint wage determination with employers, but are weak organizationally. It is apparent that we are dealing here with a vital area in our economy where the market mechanism has proved highly deficient and where no systematic bargaining relationship exists between la-

[44] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization,* 102.
[45] Metzler, *Two Years of Farm Wage Stabilization in California,* 32.
[46] *Ibid.,* 35.
[47] Holmaas, *Agricultural Wage Stabilization,* 84-85.

bor and employers. Thus this economic area would seem to pose a prime case which warrants governmental attention if the public interest is to be properly served. What governmental action should be taken to improve the method by which the terms of employment may be arrived at by workers and employers in agriculture is one of the many problems that needs exploration. It was this type of problem, among others, that President Truman's Commission on Migratory Labor in 1951 had in mind when it recommended establishing a Federal Committee to coordinate a policy and program for agricultural wage workers.

BOOK REVIEWS

Money at Interest, The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border. By ALLAN G. BOGUE. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1955, x, 293 p., bibliography, index, $4.00.)

This is a study in depth of farm mortgage lending in the post-Civil War era, roughly 1870 to 1905, in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas. Three major sources have been used: (1) the document records of John and Ira Davenport, eastern investors, of Bath, New York, (2) the records of the J. B. Watkins Co., land mortgage brokers of Lawrence, Kansas, and (3) County Register of Deeds records for Peeble Township, Dodge County, Nebraska and Kinsley Township, Edwards County, Kansas.

Dr. Bogue's monograph is an important contribution to the history of credit problems in the prairie West during the period of early settlement. He draws a clear picture of the eastern investor in Western farm mortgages, and of the brokers who channeled these funds to a credit-hungry farm frontier. While this picture lacks the vivid and evil colors in which the agrarian radicals painted the eastern money lender, the portrait that emerges is both a more believable and a more charitable one.

From the Davenport and Watkins documents, it is possible to chart the rapid declines in frontier rates of interest that were characteristic of successive settlement advances. The Davenports were loaning in Illinois at rates in the 10 per cent range in the early 1870's and these slipped rapidly to 8 and 7 per cent after 1878; at the same time their Nebraska loans bore nominal rates of 12 per cent and hovered in the 9-10 per cent range throughout the 1880's. In the mid-1870's, Watkins was drawing 12 per cent loans in Kansas which with commissions were costing the borrowers 15 to 17 per cent. By 1880, Watkins was lending at a straight 10 per cent in eastern Kansas, all service charges but abstracting and recording included. These rapidly falling rates underline an oft-forgotten fact: It was the borrower who wanted the short-term two- and three-year loans on the frontier. The lender, knowing the history of frontier rates, wanted five-year mortgages if he could get them. Dr. Bogue's study makes one point very clear: The common criticism of short-term mortgages is unrealistic in a period of falling money rates.

This study also clearly marks out a pitfall that has trapped many research workers. Nominal rates of interest stated in mortgage documents and notes can be very misleading. J. B. Watkins stood ready to loan at any rate from 7 to 12 per cent in 1881, with his "flexible" commission adjusted to yield him the 10 per cent he was seeking.

One interesting fact garnered from the Watkins papers is that as early as 1880 the Lawrence loan broker was arguing that the break point in interest rates in Kansas should follow the western boundaries of Smith, Osborne, Russell, Barton, and Reno counties. West of this line, the Watkins men argued, the rates should be higher because the risk was greater. Current lending and especially appraisal practices of the Federal Land Banks and insurance companies are today based on a hypothetical line that follows this same rough boundary. From these records, it is clear that the higher-risk areas of the western plains were apparent and recognized long before the dramatic dust storms and drouths of the 1930's.

The "eastern money lender" and his western agent emerge from this study with the gilt rubbed off and much white showing through. It is no criticism of Dr. Bogue's careful scholarship to wish that he had had access to contemporary records of these many loan transactions, as seen through the borrowers' eyes. One cannot avoid wondering what the local evaluation was of one of the Davenports' favorite Kansas loan agents, who was praised because he remitted promptly and would always "stir the men up 30 days before due."

There is a suspicion, too, that only the documentary records of the more stable, reliable, and ethical among the private loan agents and investors are ever likely to be preserved for the historian. There must be a "Gresham's Law in reverse" operating in the field of private documentary collections, tending to preserve for the research worker those that throw the principals in a favorable light. The less lovely features of pioneer money lending are not likely to be fully recorded, even in documentary collections as voluminous as those of the Davenports and Watkins.

As emphasized in the author's introduction, many more studies of this careful nature are needed before we will have a clear picture of the tenure and credit system of the frontier. While non-resident mortgage creditors were of great importance in the early years of settlement, they were quickly joined by local creditors, who have continued to the present day to provide much of the mortgage credit in the rural Middle West. In historical research, as in current economic research, the institutional lender is prominently featured because his records are apt to be most complete and most easily accessible. This tends to obscure the prominent role of indi-

vidual local lenders, who even today hold more than half of all recorded mortgage debt in many midwest states. As Dr. Bogue shows, this pattern was established before 1900 in both the Nebraska and Kansas townships studied.

Dr. Bogue's study of the mortgage recordings in Kinsley Township leads him to doubt the local charge, made in 1892, that "two-thirds of the land in Edwards County (Kansas) was held by mortgagees." His own study shows that no more than 40 per cent of the agricultural land of Kinsley Township was transferred to mortgagees throughout the entire 30-year period, 1875-1905. This conclusion may fail to give sufficient weight to land-contract credit. The land contract, or contract for deed, was widely used on the frontier, particularly by the speculator. These instruments were then (and still are) frequently confused with the farm mortgage. They were quite often not recorded, for they covered the sale of land the title to which remained with the seller until final payment on the contract. While "two-thirds of the county" may have been too high, a study of recorded mortgage foreclosures alone will certainly result in too low an estimate of land lost through credit difficulties.

The emphasis in this study tends to rest on the individuals concerned. This is commendable, and contributes to the book's readability. At the same time, it seems pertinent to draw some broader conclusions. The basic problem dealt with in this study is the unsuitability of the settlement and credit pattern of the humid East to the high risk and highly commercial cash-crop agriculture of the Great Plains. Professor Paul W. Gates (to whom this book is dedicated) and many others have called attention to the inadequacy of national land policy, and the Homestead Act in particular, in the Great Plains. Dr. Bogue rightly emphasizes the impossibility of subsistence agriculture in a subhumid environment. This precluded the "hang on and worry through" solution to initial reverses, for many plains settlers and their creditors as well. The evil in the Western credit story was not in the men but in the system. The commercial credit and banking structure was simply unsuited to the needs of agriculture in a high-risk area. Free land was not enough in the short-grass country; long-term credit was needed and for this there was no public policy or program.

Philip M. Raup, University of Minnesota

•

Culture on the Moving Frontier. By Louis B. Wright. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1955, 273 p., $3.50.)

"'How harde wyll it bee for one browghte up amonge bookes and learned men to lyve in a barbarous place where is no learnynge and lesse cyvillytie' wrote one of John Winthrop's friends on the eve of his departure for New England." This fear of intellectual isolation seemed to have been vindicated by the American experience for some centuries. As settlers moved west, first over the Atlantic and then across a continent to the Pacific, it became clear, as Dixon Ryan Fox has pointed out, that they were going downstairs from civilization. Yet the astonishing thing was the rapidity of the pioneer's subsequent upward climb in face of immense cultural difficulties.

Dr. Louis Wright is concerned with the process of culture survival and transmission on the moving frontier. Believing that Turner and Toynbee "discount or overlook the potent minority of culture bearers who plant and cultivate the elements of traditional civilization on each successive frontier," he has studied the struggle against barbarism on four typical frontiers and then analyzed the agencies of cultural transmission.

Neither the Virginia plantation nor the Ohio log cabin provided as fertile ground for the development of a vigorous culture as the moving New England township or congregation. Yet in all there developed a healthy regard for learning despite, or perhaps because of, the immediate preoccupation with material things. In almost every community there was an individual or a handful of educated people determined to prevent that cultural disintegration which physical isolation threatened. The efforts of men like William Byrd who "rose about 5 o'clock and read two chapters of Hebrew and 200 verses in Home . . . said my prayers and ate milk for breakfast" kept culture alive. Byrd could be matched by Australian squatters who retired to their studies in the evening and read philosophy and politics. On the moving American frontier, the work of men like Byrd was quickly bolstered by the activities of the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist clergy, and later by the enthusiasm of the Methodist circuit riders.

Turner has pointed out that the roughly parallel spearheads of migrants leaving the East carried them "their school systems, their systems of local government, their literature and ideas." Dr. Wright has illuminated and pinpointed this process with its mingling of peoples and interplay of ideas and institutions. Virginians and Kentuckians established Presbyterian churches and distilleries, New Englanders built Congregational churches and colleges. Friendly rivalry for the souls of men between Protestant dissenters—Catholics and Episcopalians played a minor role—brought a multiplication of schools and colleges, of textbooks, tracts, and libraries. The pioneer packed his Bible in the covered wagon; the itinerant peddler and the enterprising merchant brought to the West reprints, often pirated, of the latest English romantic novels and poems. Frontier settlements spawned newspapers like rabbits; their columns were often partly filled with extracts and poems from imported books.

Dr. Wright has shown the vitality and toughness of traditional culture and has clearly demonstrated how it was transmitted on the moving frontier. Yet, as he points out, few settlers in the West had the enthusiasm of a Daniel Drake or a Josiah Royce or had access to the circulating or reference libraries which grew up. One suspects that the Indiana communities, which were prejudiced against "colleges, pianos and Yankees," were not exceptional. But, the American frontier was closer to Yale and Princeton than the Australian frontier to Oxford and Cambridge. One result was the more rapid development of colleges and small universities in America.

One important conclusion Dr. Wright reiterates throughout this all too slim volume: It would have been a miracle if western culture had proved highly original. Its carriers were concerned with the preservation of the best of their civilized past, and this past was essentially English. Its incredible power of assimilation enabled it to absorb the French, Spanish, and other European influences, and to give

an indelible imprint to American culture. The emergence of a distinctive American culture was a relatively late development; it was at first retarded by that "unlicensed borrowing" which colonized parts of Virginia (and Botany Bay) and to which Charles Dickens took such violent exception in his *Notes on America*.

This is a reprint of six lectures delivered at Indiana University in 1953; it loses nothing of its vitality and gains in scholarship in the study. It is a thoughtful and stimulating piece of work by a man conscious of his debt alike to the civilization of the East coast and to the generosity of California pioneers.

Norman Harper, University of Melbourne

•

Merchants, Farmers and Railroads: Railroad Regulation and New York Politics, 1850-1887. By Lee Benson. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1955, x, 310 p., $5.50.)

This study of the influence of the pivotal state of New York upon the initiation of state and federal railroad legislation involves a complex congeries of intra and interstate conflicts.

The natural advantage which the trading cities, especially the Metropolis, enjoyed under the canal regime was threatened by the coming of the trunk line railroads and the mercantile interests sought by equalizing rates, imposing railroad tolls, and improving the canal system to restore their former prosperity. The roads were too powerful to permit any such checks on the forward march of big corporate utilities.

Following a brief trial, 1855-1857, of a mildly supervisory board, the roads were left to the exploitive opportunities and assumed countervailing checks of free competition. There followed inevitably an orgy of stock manipulations and business machinations.

The defensive organization of merchants was joined rather reluctantly by farmer groups suffering from western competition. Eastern agrarian antimonopoly movements thus antedated the more publicized western. The merchant-farmer coalition was far from harmonious; natural differences were further complicated by regional divisions within both interests. Opportunist politicians sought to capitalize on the agitation. For a long generation, railroad regulation was a major issue in state politics.

In a period of well-nigh openly corrupt business and politics, the efforts at any effective regulation were for years ineffective. Railroad lobbies could buy or pressure immunity from serious restraints. But the maraudings of a Gould and Vanderbilt and the finesse of a Fink, Depew, and Scott were alike unable to bring stability and security to the utilities. Gentlemen's agreements and pools did not provide the answer. Belatedly for all concerned, it developed that a degree of regulation was essential for the private as well as for the public interest.

The turning point in New York came with the epochal report of the Hepburn legislative committee in 1879 and in the subsequent legislation which under the direction of rate-making experts like Simon Sterne was to contribute to the federal interstate commerce act.

In this realistic presentation, the indictment of the robber barons gets no abatement or extenuation and the political leaders concerned gain no added stature. Contrary to the conventional "profile of courage," Governor Cleveland appears as an opportunist who after securing the antimonopoly support aided the Gould interests in appointments and veto. Aside from differences of fact and opinion as to the extent of the candidates' commitment to the antimonopoly groups, the competence and fitness of the commissioners, and the desirability of legislative rate making, the author fails to give adequate recognition to the consistency of Cleveland's constitutional position, narrow and obsolescent as it may have been at times. He was ever, as mayor, governor, and president, an individualist—a "liberal" in the original sense—but he was not and never pretended to be a progressive.

The term "Communication Revolution" which the author applies to this stage of the history of American transportation would seem to be quite inappropriate for the incompleteness and imperfections, technically and managerially, of the national system in the quarter-century of this study. These elemental, inchoate conditions in operation and business organization were largely responsible for the extent and nature of the wastes, exploitations, and peculations which forced, all too tardily and hesitantly, regulatory measures.

In the skillful organization of so great a mass of conflicting evidence and in his generally judicial interpretation of it, Dr. Benson has made a distinct contribution to this key area of our economic history.

Earle D. Ross, Iowa State College

•

A History of the Freedman's Bureau. By George R. Bentley. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955, x, 298 p., appendix, and index, $5.00.)

Since 1904, Paul S. Peirce's study of the Freedmen's Bureau has been the standard treatment of the subject. And although the monograph still has much to commend it, within recent years its limitations have grown insistently more serious. During the last fifty years an enormous amount of scholarly literature has appeared, re-examining the Reconstruction era and revising a number of views about it. This fact alone would justify a reconsideration of the role of the Bureau. But more important, since the day of Peirce two major manuscript collections, without which the full history of the agency could never be written, have been opened to historians; they are the papers of O. O. Howard, commissioner of the institution, and the voluminous records of the Bureau itself.

Drawing heavily upon these collections, Mr. Bently has now produced a book that in every respect, save the degree of literary grace, is the superior of the older work. As the winner of the Albert J. Beveridge Award for 1953, it has a scholarship, a fullness, and a detail which are unknown to Peirce's study. Within the range of fourteen chapters, it touches upon every aspect of the Bureau's history, at least broadly, from its creation in 1865 until its disestablishment seven years later. Through an impressive amount of research, the author is able to offer new insights into the purpose and means of the Radicals in continuing the institution beyond its original life of one year after the close of the war. He also devotes considerable attention to the abor-

tive efforts of the President to thwart the Radical scheme and to his subsequent attempt to discredit the agency, although the account of the latter is not wholly convincing.

But the central figure of the story is Howard, his character, his philosophy of the Bureau's mission, his role in the conflict between its supporters and its enemies, and his part in the founding of the university in Washington bearing his name. "The Christian Soldier" is seen in a new dimension.

Yet in spite of a general merit, the book of Mr. Bentley does not consist of unalloyed virtue. His treatment of the Bureau and politics and his firm assertion that it deliberately fostered the interests of the Republican Party among the freedmen are certain to promote disagreement. This reviewer, for one, is unconvinced by the argument. Neither on the basis of his own research into the Bureau's history, nor on that of the author's unsatisfactory evidence, is he persuaded that any great number of agents prostituted their offices to partisan political ends.

More disturbing than this is the failure of the work to live up fully to its title. The story is really one more of conception than of execution, of policy-making than of implementation of policy. To a large extent the success or failure of the Bureau depended upon the strength or weakness of its representatives in the field, the men who were most immediately involved in the matters of relief, justice, labor contracts, and education for the ex-slaves. Yet here, save in rare instances, one gets but a brief glimpse into the workings of the institution below the level of the assistant commissioners. The story is almost as if the Bureau had a very large head but an anemic body.

This is a good book, but it would have been a better one had the promise of its title been more amply fulfilled.

Martin Abbott, Oglethorpe University

•

The Industrial Worker in Pennsylvania, 1800-1840. By William A. Sullivan. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1955, vii, 253 p.)

This is a clear, well-organized, and decidedly well-written account of Pennsylvania's industrial workers during the first forty years of the 19th century. Opening with a sketch of the rise of industry, it emphasizes the importance which iron and textiles early attained in what was still a predominantly agricultural state. It then proceeds to present a graphic picture of the hard lot of the wage earners in industry. "Freedom of contract" meant primarily the freedom of the employer to exploit. Hours were long, rules were strict, pay was low. The employer, faced by high labor costs, usually sought to pay marginal wages—just enough to keep the workers from deserting the job. The story of child labor is especially tragic. Occasionally there is a lighter note, as in the account of the greater freedom that was sometimes found in the life of the iron worker, but the general picture can only be described as grim. And Dr. Sullivan shows that, despite efforts at unionization, the worker's situation showed a tendency to deterioriate rather than to improve as the decades wore on.

Perhaps the most significant part of the book is its treatment of the relationship between labor and politics during the Jacksonian period. Dr. Sullivan conclusively demonstrates that the Workingmen's Parties organized in various parts of the state were rather the result of political maneuvering by professional politicians than manifestations of political interest by the wage earners themselves and that the course of their operations was more often detrimental than favorable to the fortunes of the Democratic party. He also shows that Pennsylvania's wage earners, while they voted for Jackson in 1828 in large numbers, found astonishingly little that was attractive in the Democratic party's program in subsequent years; that, as a matter of fact, they were more inclined to vote Whig than to vote Democratic. He also demonstrates that the Jacksonian party in Pennsylvania derived its strength far more from the agricultural regions of the state than it did from the industrial and urban centers. In view of the current controversy over the origins and character of Jacksonian Democracy, these findings in themselves make this book a significant contribution to the political as well as to the social and economic history of the early 19th century.

Glyndon G. Van Deusen, University of Rochester

•

Land Tenure: Proceedings of the International Conference on Land Tenure and Related Problems in World Agriculture Held at Madison, Wisconsin, 1951. Edited by Kenneth H. Parsons, Raymond J. Penn, and Philip M. Raup. (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1956, 739 p., $10.00.)

The papers presented in this volume are, according to the editors, essentially by-products of the 1951 conference on world land tenure problems. They comprise the written record of the efforts of a number of persons to work through problems in this important area. The conference was composed of approximately 50 foreign delegates, 25 foreign trainees, and 75 American scholars and administrators.

Many views on a number of vital problems relating to land tenure are presented in the volume. The editors are to be congratulated upon the way in which they have arranged and then indexed the papers so that those relating to a particular topic may be readily found. The arrangement is by world areas and by types of problem. The problems include ownership, sale and transfer, inheritance, conservation, taxation, the cooperative approach, and landlord-tenant relationships.

Although a number of papers contain bits of penetrating historical analysis, the concern of the conference was the immediate situation. The volume is of most value from the historian's point of view as an analysis of the present situation by experts. It will serve both as a checkpoint for historical work and as a source of material on post-World War II land tenure problems.

Wayne D. Rasmussen, U. S. Department of Agriculture

NEWS NOTES AND COMMENTS

APRIL 1956 MEETING

The Agricultural History Society, meeting with the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held a conference of the Executive Committee, a joint session with the Association, and the annual business meeting on April 19, 1956.

The meeting of the Executive Committee, a breakfast session, was attended by members of that committee, chairmen of other committees of the Society, and past presidents. The president of the Society, George L. Anderson, presided. The secretary-treasurer presented the financial report, which was discussed, and circulated copies of the minutes of the 1955 meeting. In connection with the discussion of matters pending from 1955, the motion was made, seconded, and passed that representation of the Agricultural History Society on the Economic History Association Council be on a rotating basis. Vernon Carstensen reported for the Committee on the Editorship that it recommended to the Executive Committee that the proposal of the University of Illinois for the editorship be adopted. Mr. Carstensen then proposed, based upon his experience as editor, that the editor be appointed for a definite period of time. Mr. Buck suggested that the Society follow the precedent of the American Historical Association and appoint its editor for three years. The following motion was made, seconded, and passed: that the editor shall be appointed for a three-year term and shall be eligible for reappointment. The following resolution was then introduced, seconded, and passed: Resolved, that the Society accept the offer of the University of Illinois, subject to review by the Executive Committee of any proposed changes in format and editorial policy of *Agricultural History*. Mr. Wall suggested that any future committee on the editorship be made up of persons who could meet for conferences on the matter. Mr. Burmeister moved that the Executive Committee express its appreciation to the chairman and members of the Committee on the Editorship for their work. The motion was seconded and passed. It was moved on behalf of Mr. Loehr that the Executive Committee express its appreciation to Mr. Carstensen for his able services as editor. The motion was seconded and passed. Mr. Hesseltine reported for the Edwards Memorial Awards Committee.

The joint session of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Society, held at 10:00 a.m., April 19, 1956, had as its theme Ohio Valley agriculture. The program was arranged by George L. Anderson, Ben F. Rogers, Jr., and James H. Shideler. Fred A. Shannon of the University of Illinois served as chairman of the session. Paul Henlein of the University of Wisconsin presented a paper on "Shifting Range-Feeder Patterns in the Ohio Valley before 1860." He pointed out that the shift from range cattle to the fattening of stockers began about 1820. The main feeding regions raised some stockers but imported many more from the Kentucky blue-grass region and later from other areas. In the 1830's and 1840's the graziers of western Ohio began large-scale operations. They obtained their stockers from Missouri and Illinois.

Clayton S. Ellsworth of the College of Wooster discussed "The Coming of Rural Consolidated Schools to the Ohio Valley." He pointed out that until after the Civil War, the aim was to build a one-room school at every crossroads. Thereafter, the drive was to build consolidated schools where rural children would have the same educational advantages as city children. It was not until the 1890's that the movement became effective. The children were transported to the schools by wagons, usually covered in some way. The problem of transportation was one of the major objectives raised to consolidated schools.

James F. Hopkins of the University of Kentucky pointed out in his paper, "The Farming Activities of Henry Clay," that Clay had an intelligent and active interest in agriculture. He practiced diversified agriculture on his home plantation of Ashland, and on his other plantations. He used slave labor on plantations, both owning and hiring slave labor. Clay was interested in protecting and improving the hemp industry, but Kentucky hemp had difficulties in meeting quality tests for naval use. Livestock breeding became one of Clay's special interests and the horses, mules, and cattle that he bred became widely known. In 1815, he saw a herd of Herefords in England, and in 1817 he imported several head of that breed. In general, Clay operated a good farm on a practical basis but was not afraid to experiment.

Weymouth T. Jordan of Florida State University summarized the major points of the three papers and discussed their relationship to each other and to the development of agriculture in Ohio Valley.

The annual business meeting of the Agricultural History Society was called to order by President George L. Anderson at 11:30 a.m., April 19, 1956. The secretary-treasurer distributed copies of his financial report, which was approved. Mr. Carstensen reported on the decision of the Executive Committee to transfer the editorship of *Agricultural History* to the University of Illinois. H. C. M. Case then discussed some of the plans for editing the journal that had been developed by a committee at the University of Illinois. The following resolution was introduced on behalf of Mr. Loehr: Be it resolved, that the Agricultural History Society recognizes the invaluable services of the present editor of its journal, *Agricultural History*, that the Society regrets the necessity of his relinquishing the duties of the editorship, that the Society desires to tender to Dr. Vernon Carstensen its gratitude for his work as editor, and that the Society takes pride in the high standards maintained in its journal by the editor. The resolution was seconded and passed.

Mr. Anderson reported that the following had been appointed to the Program Committee for the joint meeting in December with the American Historical Association in December: D. J. Berthrong, D. M. Ellis, R. M. Wik, and A. V. House. He urged those with suggestions for a program to communicate with one of the committee members. Mr. Gates suggested that joint programs be arranged with the American Farm Economic Association.

The Edwards Memorial Award Committee reported that the two awards for 1955 were to Ralph

W. Haskins for his article on "Planter and Cotton Factor in the Old South: Some Areas of Friction," and to John H. Moore for a paper entitled "Cotton Breeding in the Old South."

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JANUARY 1, 1955 TO DECEMBER 31, 1955
of the
AGRICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

•

Amt. in checking account, Jan. 1, 1955		$1,816.65
Amt. in savings fund, Interstate Bldg. Assn., Jan. 1, 1955		1,644.44
Receipts to December 31, 1955:		
Sale of back numbers	$ 295.85	
Sale of reprints	318.35	
1951-1953 dues	12.00	
1954 dues	92.00	
1955 dues	1,359.08	
1956 dues	1,073.70	
1957 dues	29.50	
1958 dues	4.50	
Edwards Memorial Fund	100.00	
Gifts	4.00	
Interest	65.39	
Total Receipts		3,354.37
Total to be accounted for		6,815.46
Expenditures to December 31, 1955:		
Waverly Press, printing 2 issues of Agricultural History and balance of 1954 account	$1,515.66	
Antes Printing Co., printing 2 issues of Agricultural History	1,238.90	
Reprints	405.06	
Letterheads and envelopes	46.68	
Refund on cancelled subscriptions	10.45	
Payment on joint dues to Economic History Association	141.00	
Postage	105.00	
Edwards Memorial Fund Awards	100.00	
Bond for Secretary-Treasurer	10.00	
Total Expenditures		3,572.75
Amt. in checking account, Dec. 31, 1955		1,282.38*
Amt. in savings fund, Interstate Bldg. Assn., Dec. 31, 1955		1,960.33
Total accounted for		6,815.46

*Of this total, $237.37 comprised the Edwards Memorial Fund.

During the year $250.50 was transferred from the checking account to the savings fund.

ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS

Clarence H. Danhof of Tulane University is the author of "Business Leadership in the South," *Journal of Business*, 29:130-137 (April, 1956).

Arthur G. Peterson, Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, returned in May from a three month's survey of the food and agricultural situation in Iran and Pakistan. Dr. Peterson served as agricultural economist with two teams that surveyed the nutritional status of the Iranian Imperial Army and the Pakistani Armed Forces.

John T. Schlebecker of Montana State University has compiled a "List of Master's Theses in the Field of History Prepared at Montana State University, Missoula 1915-1954," for *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, 6:61-63 (Winter, 1956). The list contains a number of titles relating to agricultural history.

Louis Bernard Schmidt, Tucson, Arizona, discusses "Industrial Science and the Liberal Tradition in Education," in *Social Studies*, 47:123-130 (April, 1956).

James H. Shideler of the University of California at Davis discusses "Herbert Hoover and the Federal Farm Board Project, 1921-1925," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 42:710-729 (March, 1956).

Mildred Throne of the Iowa State Historical Society is the editor of "The California Journey of George D. Magoon, 1825-1854," *Iowa Journal of History*, 54:131-168 (April, 1956).

Robert L. Tontz, formerly of Oklahoma A. & M. College, is now with the Production Economics Research Branch of the U. S. Agricultural Research Service in Washington, D. C. He is the senior author of "Reliability of the Yearly Deed Sample of Land Prices and Transfers," *Land Economics*, 31:372-378 (November, 1955).

Lazar Volin of the U. S. Department of Agriculture discusses "Soviet Agricultural Policy after Stalin: Results and Prospects," *Journal of Farm Economics*, 38:274-286 (May, 1956). Dr. Volin is also the author of "The Soviet Union Competes in Cotton," *Foreign Agriculture*, 20(4):3-5, 19 (April, 1956).

AN AGRARIAN HISTORY OF ENGLAND

A group of British historians have established an advisory committee, with Professor R. H. Tawney as chairman, to compile and publish an agrarian history of English. The history, which will comprise at least seven volumes, will deal with arable and pastoral husbandry, the marketing of produce, the distribution of landownership, rural housing, and the structure of rural society. H. P. R. Finberg will serve as general editor of the history.